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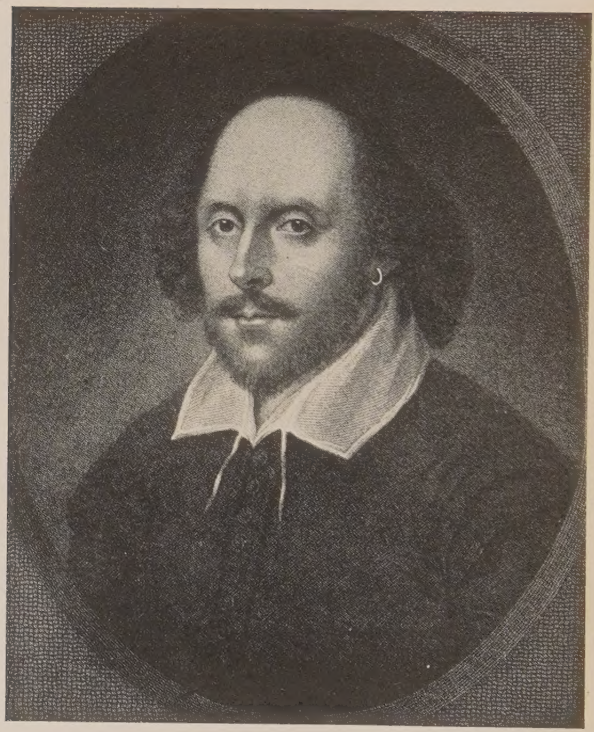
HAMLET

SHAKESPEARE

Noble Buckland



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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Merrill's English Texts

SHAKESPEARE'S

TRAGEDY OF

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY ALLAN ABBOTT, A.M., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY : : : : : : : : :

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PREFACE

This edition of *Hamlet* is planned for the use of students of the upper two years of the high school, and the introduction is addressed directly to them. Such aspects of the play are emphasized as have especial interest and significance for readers of that age; its spirit being shown as that of the theater rather than of the study; its motive, the embodiment in action of a young man's problem, rather than the formulation of a mature philosophy; its poetry, as rhythmic speech living on the lips of men, rather than abstract metrical technique. Results of modern research are not ignored, in so far as they have bearing on the just appreciation of the play by high school students; beyond this point, enough is left unsolved, the editor hopes, to challenge the curiosity of the thoughtful, and lead them to seek further light in college courses or on library shelves. Teachers using this book are urged to cover the ground with sufficient speed and sufficient inattention to minute and critical details to preserve something of the movement of the acted play.

The editor's constant obligation to Shakespearian scholars, especially those of Harvard and Columbia Universities, is manifest. Particular acknowledgment, however, is due to Professor William Allan Neilson, of Harvard, on the side of scholarship, and to Professor Franklin T. Baker, of Teachers College, for many years of guidance in the teaching art.

A. A.

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INTRODUCTION

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare's Life. — To get a just idea of Shakespeare as he seemed to himself and his friends, we must put out of mind the fame that has come to him during the last three hundred years, his undisputed standing as the greatest writer of England, perhaps of the world, the unceasing study of his plays in the library and production of them on the stage. We must think, rather, of the village boy going to London to seek a living; being interested in the popular, but not much respected, theater; becoming a fair actor, a skilled adapter of old plays, then a very successful playwright and a stockholder in the leading company in London; generally regarded (in contrast to his learned friend Jonson) as a ready, rather than a scholarly, writer — content, if his plays succeeded on the stage, to let any printer get out cheap copies of them without even his revision, while Jonson took pains to see through the press what he was careful to call his "works."

Stratford. — Shakespeare was born in April, 1564, — the exact day is not known, — in the village of Stratford on Avon, in Warwickshire. It is the same general region described by George Eliot in *Silas Marner* and her other novels, a prosperous farming region in the heart of England. London was eighty miles off, a long distance in those days; five miles away was the great Warwick Castle, renowned in English history; and ten miles farther was Kenilworth, where the Earl of Leicester, when Shakespeare was eleven years old, entertained Queen Elizabeth with dramatic spectacles of royal splendor.

Shakespeare's father, John, had come from a farming community called Snitterfield to Stratford, the market town, and established

himself as a dealer in agricultural produce — grain, wool, meat, and leather. He held various town offices: ale-taster (there were thirty ale houses in the town of two thousand people), burgess, constable, and alderman. At first prosperous, he apparently had business reverses, got at length into legal difficulties, and was helped materially by his successful son, the London theater man. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer, and kin to a family of very high standing.

Of Shakespeare's boyhood we know very little. There was a "Free Grammar School" in Stratford, to which the bailiff's son would probably go; and the usual course of study in such schools was mainly Latin, beginning with grammar and conversation, and including Æsop's Fables, Ovid, Vergil, Terence, Plautus, Horace, and other authors. In his plays, Shakespeare showed that he remembered enough of his Latin for an occasional quotation or joke, and some of the authors, especially Ovid, are alluded to frequently; but he preferred to read Plutarch and other classics in translation. His plays show also much enjoyment of country landscape, woods, flowers, and streams; and familiarity with hunting in many forms, coursing with hounds, deer hunting, falconry. There is a tradition of his having gotten into a scrape by poaching on the grounds of Sir Thomas Lucy, and of his being forced to leave town, and later taking revenge by ridiculing Sir Thomas as Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor;* but this story, like many other Shakespeare anecdotes, cannot be traced back earlier than about a hundred years after his death.

We know that before he was nineteen, he was married to Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years older than himself, who may perhaps have lived in the picturesque cottage in Shottery that tourists go to see. They had three children, — a daughter Susanna, and twins, Hamnet and Judith.

London. — Just when Shakespeare left home for London, is not known; but by 1592 he had established himself as a rising playwright and actor, and in the following two years he published the poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," which won him his first renown in the literary world.

The London to which Shakespeare came was a city somewhat smaller than Louisville, Jersey City, or Minneapolis now. Old maps show, north of the Thames, the walled city with its narrow streets, and wooden, red-roofed houses; with the Tower at one end, St. Paul's Cathedral (later burned) in the middle, and at the west the college-like grounds of the Temple, formerly the home of the Knights Templars,

"till they decay'd, through pride,"

but for long, and to this day, the center of the legal profession. The river was spanned by the famous London Bridge, lined with shops, and was crowded with boats — not only foreign shipping, but row-boats used as we now use cabs, and elaborate barges, like Elizabeth's royal barge described in *Kenilworth*. Across the river, beyond the jurisdiction of the city authorities, were many inns and places of amusement. Archery butts and pits for bear-baiting were long known; but regular playhouses where players could act instead of having to find an inn yard or nobleman's hall, were modern, the first dating from 1576, about ten years before Shakespeare came to London.

The Author of Hamlet. — By the time Shakespeare came to write *Hamlet*, he was nearly forty years old and had been in London perhaps fifteen years. He had worked his way up through the apprenticeship of patching up old plays and acting minor parts to a responsible position as one of the leading men of the best company in London, — the company which, when James came to the throne, was honored by being designated the "King's Men," with the right to wear the royal livery and to act at court. Most of his best comedies had been written — *The Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Twelfth Night*, among them. Most of his English historical plays were likewise completed, and one Roman play, *Julius Cæsar*. He had approached tragedy in several of the comedies, especially the *Merchant* and *Much Ado;* he had treated it as growing from romance in *Romeo and Juliet*, and from politics in *Julius Cæsar;* he was now to devote the highest powers of his mature mind

to a series of tragedies dealing with man's inner life. Following *Hamlet* come the great tragedies of souls essentially or in part noble, torn by great passions: *Othello*, the tragedy of a magnanimous mind tricked by a scoundrel; *Lear*, the tragedy of an old man who does not know which daughter to trust; *Macbeth*, the tragedy of a great captain possessed of evil ambition; *Antony and Cleopatra*, the tragedy of a world lost for unlawful love; *Coriolanus*, the tragedy of excessive pride. There were also to come several romances, graver in tone than his early comedies, ending with *The Tempest*.

His Retirement. — Shortly after writing *Hamlet*, Shakespeare began to withdraw, first from acting, then from the life of the theater generally. He had already established himself as a man of property and standing in his home town of Stratford. He had, in 1597, bought the largest house in town, New Place, and was interested in improving the house and grounds. He owned several other properties both in the town and in the farming land near it; he was looked upon by his neighbors as a man with money to lend, and his various investments involved him in several lawsuits. He had some years before succeeded in getting a grant of arms, and was thereafter known as "William Shakespeare, Gentleman." About 1611 he lived chiefly at Stratford, making occasional trips to London, where he had many friends and some business affairs, selling his share in the theaters and investing in real estate. In 1616 he died, and was buried, according to old English custom, in the chancel of the Stratford church.

There are various things to testify to the high esteem and affection in which Shakespeare was held by his professional associates; among them, the fact that seven years after his death they gathered together all they could of his plays and published them in a dignified form as a memorial volume, with a dedicatory poem by the most admired writer of the day, Ben Jonson, "to the memory of my beloved, the author Mr. William Shakespeare." This is the so-called "first folio." Together with the cheap and carelessly printed earlier editions of single plays, it is the nearest thing we have to what Shakespeare actually wrote, and the basis, with them, of all modern editions.

THE PLAY

Problems. — *Hamlet*, the first of Shakespeare's deeper tragedies, has been the subject of endless learned discussion, most of which we need not consider. The problems arising from the play will be much simplified for us if we remember that Shakespeare's habit was not to invent his entire story, as most modern writers try to do, but to take a plot already popular in history, fiction, or drama, and work it over for his own purposes. These purposes, representing the original contributions of Shakespeare, fall under three main heads: *dramaturgy*, or the art of making the play effective on the stage for the audience; *characterization*, or the interpretation of the thoughts, feelings, and motives of the persons in the play; and *poetic style*, or the expression of these things in the most fitting and noble form. We should, then, in studying *Hamlet*, consider these four elements: the original story on which the play is based, Shakespeare's dramaturgy, his characters, and his poetic style.

The Story. — The Hamlet story is an ancient one. A thousand years before Shakespeare there had been an old Saga of a Danish prince "Amleth" kept from his kingdom by a usurper, feigning insanity for safety while he decided how to act, being tricked by a girl set to spy on him, being sent to England to be murdered, but escaping to kill the tyrant and reclaim his throne. When Shakespeare was beginning his career, this story had recently become known in a French version, had been translated into English, and dramatized, probably by the popular writer of tragedies, Thomas Kyd.

Revenge Plays. — Kyd's version has been lost, but we can get a fairly accurate idea of it from the facts known about Kyd and from the type of play that his famous *Spanish Tragedy* made popular on the stage for a generation. These "revenge plays," of which a number are known, dealt with the obligation of a man to execute blood-vengeance for the murder of a father or a son. He was usually incited by a ghost, hesitated in acting, and went mad, or pretended to do so; was given to meditation and soliloquy; and finally overwhelmed himself and every one else in a general slaughter. These and other features, such as graveyard scenes and the songs of a mad woman,

were common in plays of this type, as Thorndike has shown in his book on *Tragedy;* and an Elizabethan audience would expect all or most of them in a revenge play, just as to-day an audience would expect horse thieves and gun-play in a Western melodrama or bloodhounds in *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* There had been, after 1600, a revived interest in these bloody plays; various playwrights — Marston, Chapman, and others — had tried to elevate them in style; and now Shakespeare was to try his hand.

Dramaturgy; the Stage. — His first problem was the dramaturgic one, of telling the story effectively on his stage, to the audience that came to hear it. And here we must not forget that his stage was not our stage, nor his audience our audience. Instead of our indoor theater, with an audience comfortably seated in rows facing a flat curtain that rises and falls on a scene at which the audience looks as at a picture, Shakespeare had an out-door platform, only partly covered by a roof supported by pillars, and projecting out into the audience. The spectators, surrounding the stage on three sides, stood, walked about, or sat where they pleased on portable stools. The more well-to-do sat in roofed balconies surrounding this yard or pit; some men of fashion sat on the stage, smoking or interrupting at will. Instead of the artificial glare of our electric lights, Shakespeare played in broad afternoon daylight. Instead of our elaborately painted flat scenery, he had a few painted cloths or hangings, certain solid pieces, — furniture, rocks, trees, and the like, — and probably arrangements for setting the alcove or back of the stage fairly fully. The essential working parts of this stage were the big main platform, which could not be shut off from the audience; an alcove or rear stage, that could be cut off by a "traverse" or crosswise curtain; above this a balcony, on which part of the action could take place; trap doors in the floor, from which ghosts, etc. could rise; and devices for letting down from above not only supernatural beings, but solid pieces of furniture. Usually the stage was not set to represent any particular place; headings of the various scenes ("A platform before the castle," "A room in the castle," etc.) were added by editors a hundred years and more after Shakespeare's time. The place was anywhere you liked, where the actors could appropriately

meet. It might even change while the actors were on the stage, and if so, the actors would tell you. Sometimes the lower stage and the balcony, or two other parts of the stage, might represent two places some distance apart. If it was important to make the audience think they were in some particular spot, it might be vividly described. For instance, when Hamlet says (Act I, Sc. iv), "The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold," we know it is night on the castle platform. In special cases, especially on the back stage, there might be an elaborately set scene, as a forest. But ordinarily there was nothing to mark the change of scene at all; no break in the action, except as some actors went off and others came on; little or no alteration in the setting; no closing of a curtain. Nobody could be left "on stage;" if people were killed, some way had to be devised for removing the bodies; hence Hamlet, in Act III, Sc. iv, makes his exit dragging Polonius, and at the end of Act V there is necessarily a funeral procession.

The Audience. — The audience, too, was very unlike the usual audience that gathers now to see a Shakespearian performance. Certainly nobody went as a duty. Early in Shakespeare's career, playgoing was popular with everybody, not only as a diversion, but as a means of information as well, replacing in large measure our reading of books and newspapers. Later, the increasing patronage of the court and the moral laxness that prevailed led the solid middle-class London citizens to shun the theaters and finally, in 1642, to close them by law. But in Shakespeare's time, the audience, at least in the "yard," was made up mainly of men and boys from the shops and streets who had paid a low price, from a penny to sixpence, for their afternoon's entertainment, and wanted above all things a good story swiftly told. The Elizabethan audience, whether of high or low rank, loved the spectacular — fine clothes, shows of state, banners, drums, and trumpets. They were interested in kings and nobles, especially in their misfortunes. They liked violent action; fights, murders, torture even. Death by violence was no uncommon thing in these days; Mary Queen of Scots had been beheaded within the memory of men, and traitors' heads were being exposed on pikes before the eyes of all. They believed in ghosts and witches; they

liked broad jokes and coarse language; they thought insanity was funny. They did not object if an actor held up the play to deliver some resounding bit of patriotism or popular philosophy, or to insert an allusion to some well known current event, or to pay a compliment to the King, or to ridicule some fashionable affectation, or even to score a hit against professional rivals, as in the child-actors passage (Act II, Scene ii, of *Hamlet*). They expected, as was said above in the account of revenge plays, certain conventional things in a play of the *Hamlet* type and would have been dissatisfied with any fewer deaths than cumber the stage in the fifth act.

To picture constantly this kind of audience seeing the play acted in the kind of theater they had, is the first step to feeling the play as something acted out, not merely told. When we do this, we can begin to understand something of Shakespeare's dramatic art in making out of this wild tale a play that is not only easy to follow in action, but easy to accept as true to life.

Characterization. — We accept the play as true, because Shakespeare was determined to make his persons, no matter how strange their situation or their acts, talk, think, and feel like human beings. So when we see the young Hamlet, an idealist and a thinker, confronted suddenly with sin and treachery in those nearest to him, not knowing whom he can trust, not at all confident of his own power to grapple with the evil, we forget the grewsome particulars of the old tale and accept him as speaking for all who have suddenly to stand alone "against a sea of troubles." A schoolboy once said, "*Hamlet* is a good play to read in schools, because it's a young man's story; lots of fellows about our age are just finding out there is trouble in the world." Gordon Craig, who is such a power now in creating new and artistic ways of producing plays, said that the idea behind the designs for his *Hamlet* scenery was "a lonely soul in a dark place." Just how this lonely soul works, just why there is the delay in action, the cruelty to Ophelia, the frequent self-reproach, whether Hamlet's mind is at times actually shaken and his purpose blunted by the great burden of his grief, — these, and problems like them, have formed the bulk of *Hamlet* criticism in the last century, a body of discussion in which the names of Goethe, Coleridge, Schlegel, Dow-

den, Bradley, and Brandes will give the mature student a hint of where to look for the most notable arguments.

A much debated question, at one time, was whether Hamlet really was mad. This question Hamlet answers sufficiently himself — he tells Horatio and Marcellus that he is going to "put an antic disposition on;" he says later that he is only mad "north northwest;" he talks and acts not only sensibly but wisely, except in the presence of people he mistrusts; and above all, the old story, from the earliest time, was of a prince pretending madness. Hamlet's supposed lack of will has also been much discussed; why does he keep putting off the duty of killing the king? Goethe attributed it to a sort of lofty weakness; "a lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away." Taine thought he was a victim of a too lively imagination, "which exhausts energy by the accumulation of images. . . . You recognize in him a poet's soul, made not to act but to dream." Coleridge interpreted him as the philosopher, the man of thought but not of action, "losing the power of action in the energy of resolve." And so on. But as Matthews points out, Hamlet does not appear weak of will on the stage; he holds the interest of the audience as weak men never can, and is "capable of prompt action when once he has decided what is best to do." Obviously, too, the play can go on only while Hamlet remains undecided; a revenge play must begin when the avenger knows what lies before him, and must end when he has done it. If the obstacles that prevent his doing it at once are wholly external, we have sheer melodrama; if they are partly within, we have just the opportunity, sought not only by Shakespeare but by Marston and others, for a thoughtful man in a difficult position to express, in various ways and at length, his own mental states and processes in settling these internal conflicts.

So Hamlet becomes representative of more than a prince with a murdered father; he is spokesman, as Hazlitt said, for "whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; . . . who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparition of strange things; who cannot well be at

ease while he sees evil hovering near him like a specter; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought; — he to whom the universe seems infinite and himself nothing." Externally *Hamlet* is a drama of blood vengeance, in which the opposition of the king and Hamlet appears to be the main theme; internally it is a drama of thought, and as Thorndike points out, "this story of doubt and melancholy overpowering resolution" is the real play, giving, "for the first time, full recognition of the tragic interest, movement, and significance of a man's battle with himself."

Poetic Style. — But Shakespeare was not content with making his play effective, and making his characters so much alive that to this day they are discussed as if they actually lived, instead of being imagined. He was careful to cast the play into imperishable poetic form. He had outgrown the monotonous, if splendid, swing of Marlowe's blank verse, which he had learned to write when he first came to London, and had developed a richly varied verse form, suited to a great variety of moods and emotions. In the opening scene, the speech of Marcellus, —

"Horatio says, 't is but our fantasy, "—

is in the light, easily running conversational verse that most competent dramatists had learned to write. The five beats fall regularly on alternate syllables except for an occasional stress on the first syllable of the line (as in "Touching" and "Therefore"); there is a marked pause after each line, and a light one near the middle. But at the ghost's entrance, the verse marches more slowly; the accents in some lines are very evenly placed, —

"When yond same star."

Several lines run together with no pause, some are held back and given weight and dignity by many consonants, —

"In which the majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march," —

or are even given the effect of dramatic pause by the omission of many of the light syllables, —

"Stay! — Speak! — Speak! I charge thee, speak!"

After the ghost has gone, the watchers, with an air of marked relief, return from this tense, choked utterance to the easy movement of more regular verse, —

"It faded on the crowing of the cock."

Polonius talks in neat, correct lines that are so sharply cut apart that they are often quoted as maxims, with no thought of the play at all; —

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be," —

"'Tis true, 'tis pity,
And pity 'tis, 'tis true;" —

whereas Hamlet, who holds long and complex thoughts in mind at once, speaks his soliloquies in a verse that suspends the meaning by delaying the pause till a natural conclusion of his thought; —

"Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?"

Yet Hamlet, too, can speak in detached lines, or half-lines, when his ideas come singly and swiftly, —

"Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't. — And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd."

And Polonius can, in the royal presence, at least try to sustain his simple thought through a sort of House-that-Jack-built sentence, —

"And he, repulsed — a short tale to make —
Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,

Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for."

The mere mechanics of verse form is important, if we are to get the real spirit of the play; for the Elizabethans used the rhythm of blank verse as the composer of an opera uses music, to set and to sustain the emotional tone of the drama. In reading the play, keep the rhythm always in mind, rendering it not in a mechanical or sing-song fashion, but with as full a sense as possible of the variations in swiftness, in stress, and in verse-pause that, as shown above, intensify Shakespeare's meaning.

Related to this variation in meter, is the more subtle but clearly marked variation in dignity of tone. The very natural greeting of the soldiers on watch, —

"Have you had quiet guard?
Not a mouse stirring;" —

was at one time objected to, by the French critics, as being too undignified language for poetic drama. The petulant tone in which Polonius speaks to his daughter helps to characterize him, —

"Affection! Pooh! You speak like a green girl."

Fortinbras, in his few speeches, always maintains a tone of simple soldierly dignity, —

"Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have prov'd most royally."

Hamlet himself ranges all the way from the tone of princely courtesy with which he greets Horatio, —

"Sir, my good friend, — I'll change that name with you," —

to a magnificent yet awe-struck style fit for the kingly ghost, —

"Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again;" —

or to the depths of indignation or contempt, as when he calls Claudius

"A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket . . . a king of shreds and patches!"

and again, with his dying breath, to that noble last request to Horatio, —

"If ever thou did'st hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile
And in this harsh world draw thy breath with pain
To tell my story."

Chief among the poetic characteristics of Shakespeare's style is his imagination, his constant habit of seeing everything as a picture. When night draws to an end, —

"Look, the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

Horatio, telling about ghosts that appeared before Cæsar was killed, not only sees but hears them, —

"The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets,"

and Hamlet's vision of his father's tomb opening its "ponderous and marble jaws" is not easy to forget. When Hamlet thinks of how people, even in misery, cling to life, he forgets his own trouble in picturing the disprized lover, the man chafing under lawsuits, those oppressed by the proud, and the laborer grunting and sweating under a weary load. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are like sponges that the king will squeeze dry when he pleases, or like nuts stowed in the

corner of an ape's mouth, to be chewed and swallowed at leisure; the child actors are little eaglets squawking in their nest; Claudius is not merely loathsome, he is a toad, a bat, a tomcat, a mildewed ear of grain. Fortinbras sees all the slain as the quarry of the hunter Death, and asks "What feast is preparing?" The clowns are set off into flights of loutish but imaginative wit by their very task of grave-digging, and draw Hamlet into that unforgettable apostrophe to Yorick's skull. And the wild yet lovely imaginings of the mad Ophelia are perhaps the most vivid, as they are the most touching, of all.

Stage History. — In conclusion, a few words may be said about the history of the play, since Shakespeare's time, both on the stage and in print. In Shakespeare's own company, Hamlet was acted by Richard Burbage, the greatest tragedian of the time, and according to tradition, the ghost was acted by Shakespeare himself. The traditions of Shakespeare's company were probably handed down by Davenant, who had seen them at the Blackfriar's theater, to Betterton, who began as a young man to act Hamlet in 1663, and continued till he was seventy years old. Steele, who saw Betterton at the beginning of the eighteenth century, said in the *Tatler* that in the ghost scenes "his voice never rose with a wild defiance of what he naturally revered. There was first a pause of mute amazement; then, rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the ghost equally terrible to the spectators as to himself." As in Shakespeare's time, he wore the dress of the age he lived in, which then happened to include a white neck-cloth, cocked hat, and great full-bottomed wig, much like the familiar pictures of Steele or Addison, and strangely unlike our conception of Hamlet.

The greatest actor of the part in the eighteenth century was David Garrick, a member of the famous literary club with Samuel Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, and Reynolds. He wore a full court dress of the age of George III, and to suit the taste of the times, omitted such painful details as the account of Ophelia's drowning, the grave-diggers' scene, and the poisoning of the queen, who, instead, went insane through remorse. He also introduced a combat between Hamlet and the king, in which the king was killed. By this time, too, the stage had changed from the Elizabethan platform to one more

nearly like our own, with a drop curtain and set scenery, and editors had cut the play up into acts and scenes and had written descriptions of the setting for each scene as they imagined it. With all these changes, though, Garrick kept and conveyed to his audiences the spirit of the play.

In Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* (published 1749) we get a glimpse of Garrick's acting as seen by Tom and his very unsophisticated follower, Partridge. Partridge is not impressed by the ghost till he sees how Hamlet (Garrick) is affected; then his knees knock together till Jones makes fun of him for cowardice. "'I'm not afraid of anything,' he answers, 'for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person.' 'Why, who,' cries Jones, 'dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?' 'Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw a man frightened in my life!'" And after the scene, when Jones asks if Partridge imagined that Garrick was really frightened, he answers "Nay, sir, and did you not yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case?" At the end of the play, in answer to the opinion that Garrick is the best player in the world, "'He the best player!' cries Partridge with a contemptible sneer, 'why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in the scene between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man, that is any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. . . . The king, for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other. — Anybody may see he is an actor.'"

By the end of the century (1783) Kemble had introduced a costume for Hamlet more like what is now used, with a slashed doublet, knee breeches, and plumed hat. He wore a great sword belt, the Order of the Garter to show princely rank, and the Danish Order of the

Elephant to place him as a Dane. He rendered the part with great dignity, and emphasized Hamlet's love for his father and his hopeless grief. Through the nineteenth century there were many great interpreters of Hamlet, the greatest, by common consent, being an American, Edwin Booth. He is described by Winter in his *Shakespeare on the Stage* as melancholy, poetic, religious by nature; with a noble countenance, grace and dignity of bearing, and a voice that could express every variety of serious emotion. He said himself, "Hamlet is the epitome of mankind, not an individual; a sort of magic mirror, in which all men and women see the reflex of themselves." Henry Irving showed him more as an individual, a lovable, sensitive, high strung youth, overwhelmed and embittered by grief and the sense of wrong.

The two leading Hamlets of the present day are Mr. Sothern, who plays the part in a vigorous, robust, at times passionate vein, and Sir J. Forbes-Robertson, who emphasizes the intellectual, contemplative side of Hamlet's nature. Practically all actors shorten the play materially, partly because of the time needed for setting modern scenery, and partly on account of the "star" system in companies nowadays, that offers temptations to emphasize the parts of Hamlet and Ophelia by cutting down all the other parts. An English Shakespearian company, under Mr. F. R. Benson, however, presented recently the entire play, taking six hours, bringing, as Sidney Lee thinks, the parts of the king, Laertes, and Polonius up to unsuspected interest and importance, so that "the artistic balance hangs true."

The "cuts" in a recent production of Forbes-Robertson (1915) are listed below. Students of the play will be interested to mark these passages in brackets and see what is lost or gained. The total omissions amount to nearly 1400 lines, or more than a third of the play.

Act I, Sc. i, lines 73–8, 90–5, 150–65
Sc. ii, " 16–41, 43–48
Sc. iii, " 22–8, 38–44, 116–20, 123–28
Sc. iv, " 17–38
Sc. v, " 47–52, 68–74.

Act II, Sc. i, lines 6–66
Sc. ii, " 58–85, 256–66, 320–2, 327–65, 406–16, 435–41, 489–93
Act III, Sc. i, " 46–55
Sc. ii, " 126–33, 136–8, 176–201, 297–314
Sc. iii, " 11–23, 27–35, 46–67
Sc. iv, " 45–52, 72–89, 118–23, 140–8, 150–5, 160–69, 179–210
Act IV, Sc. i, ii, iii, iv entire
Sc. v, lines 63–83, 122–130
Sc. vi, entire
Sc. vii, lines 5–35, 83–94, 110–123, 141–8, 171–2, 192–5
Act V, Sc. i, lines 83–93, 98–117
Sc. ii, " 1–75, 87–92, 114–49, 161–5, 185–210, 234–40, 246–51, 288, 365–88, 392–6.

Editors and Commentators. — With this constant adaptation of the play to changing conditions on the stage, has gone an increasing activity in publishing editions and critical comments or studies. The Folio of 1623, referred to above, was incomplete, and faulty in many respects. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, when scholars began to realize that Shakespeare was something more than an unusually successful commercial playwright, editors devoted much attention to altering the text. They corrected not only obvious printers' mistakes, but passages obscure through Shakespeare's compression of language, or through changes that had taken place in English usage, substituting language and often ideas of their own. They inserted stage directions, and divided the plays into acts and scenes. They "improved" Shakespeare's meters, and even his plots, — to the extent, in an extreme case, of giving *King Lear* a happy ending, with romantic marriage instead of death for Cordelia. Then commentators began to analyze the chief characters in the plays, often treating them as if they were actual persons to be blamed or praised for their deeds. An extreme instance of this is Mrs. Jameson's book, once popular, on the (wholly imaginary) girlhood of Shakespeare's heroines.

Writing of all sorts about Shakespeare has multiplied, not only in English but in other languages, until a library of any importance will have many feet of shelves filled with Shakespearian literature. From this mass of material, the following books are selected as being most useful and interesting to students and teachers in high schools.

SELECTED REFERENCE BOOKS

In General:

Neilson and Thorndike: *The Facts about Shakespeare.* Macmillan, 1913.

The most compact, readable, and authentic handbook of what is actually known about the poet and his work; it includes the result of recent investigations, and gives extensive classified bibliographies.

Furness, Horace Howard: A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, vol. III *Hamlet* (in two vols). Fifth edition, Lippincott, 1877.

Gives the various early texts with most of the variations proposed by the many editors; also much related information, including extended and well chosen extracts from the older criticism. A valuable summing-up of Shakespearian scholarship of all but the present generation.

For Special Aspects:

Albright, Victor E.: *The Shaksperian Stage.* N. Y. 1909.

Baker, George Pierce: *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist.* Macmillan, 1907.

Very full and interesting for the London of Shakespeare's time, and for a study of his growing power of dramatic construction.

Brandes, George: *William Shakespeare, a Critical Study.* Vol. II, Macmillan, 1898.

Being written by a Danish scholar, it is especially informing as to the old "Amleth" story, and Danish traditions and customs mentioned in the play or related to it.

Bradley, A. C.: *Shakespearian Tragedy.* Lectures on *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.* Macmillan, 1910.

Lectures 3 and 4 give a carefully reasoned summary and discussion of the leading interpretations of Hamlet's character.

Lee, Sidney: *Life of William Shakespeare.* 1899.

Includes much recently discovered material; the standard biography.

Matthews, Brander: *Shakespeare as a Playwright.* Scribners, 1913.

Written chiefly from the point of view of the acting quality of the plays, and the conditions under which they were produced; and so disposing of much of the obscurity that comes from studying them too deeply as books.

Thorndike, Ashley H.: *Tragedy* (*Types of English Literature* Series). Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908.

Especially helpful in its discussion of the relation of *Hamlet* to other revenge plays, and to tragedy in general.

Winter, William: *Shakespeare on the Stage.* New York, 1911.

Chapter V, *Hamlet*, gives much specific information, with illustrations, of the stage history of *Hamlet* from early times to the present, with accounts of the interpretation of the character by leading actors, from the point of view of a professional theatrical critic. It supplements material on this topic in Furness.

THE STUDY OF THE PLAY

1. Read the INTRODUCTION, in the foregoing pages, and note down on a card a few main headings of what to look for when reading the play. Keep this card as a bookmark, and refer to it frequently to see if you are finding what you expected.

2. If the meaning of a passage is not clear, either from obsolete language or from reference to something unfamiliar, look at the NOTES in the back of the book.

3. In reading the play, try constantly to imagine that you are seeing it acted, on either an Elizabethan or a modern stage. This will require considerable effort at first, but the power to do it grows with practice, and greatly increases one's understanding and enjoyment of the play.

4. Study a whole scene, or group of scenes, at a time. Before beginning the scene, imagine the place, and the situation before the action begins. As each person enters, try to picture him; try to call up his probable frame of mind and to forecast what he will be likely to do. If you are interrupted before you finish the study of the scene, go back to the beginning and read rapidly through to re-establish in mind the movement and feeling of the whole scene. The discussion and questions that follow are meant, chiefly, to help to build up this dramatic imagination.

5. Having studied the scene in this way, go back and read it through rapidly — preferably aloud — with the feeling that the lines are being spoken by the characters themselves, under the stress of the dramatic situation.

DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS

Act I, Scene i. — William Archer, the English dramatic critic, calls this "A consummate example of the crisply touched opening tab-

leau, making a nervous rather than an intellectual appeal, informing us of nothing, but exciting a vivid, though quite vague, anticipation" (*Playmaking*, p. 94). He regards Horatio's explanation of the quarrel with Norway, however, as a bit of formal exposition that in the acted version "all falls away, and nobody who has not studied the printed text is conscious of its absence."

Does the sentry give the challenge, or the relieving guard, — and why?

Do you see dramatic value in the periodic form of the sentence "Last night of all," etc?

What does Horatio think about ghosts, at each stage of the scene?

In view of the fact that the ghost does not speak, and will be seen again, is it necessary to have this scene acted at all?

Pick out five or six phrases or lines that show poetic imagination as explained in the Introduction, page 19.

Scene ii. — This is primarily a scene of exposition rather than action. What necessary information do we get regarding (1) past events, (2) the characters of the leading persons, (3) relations between the leading persons, (4) what may be expected to happen?

Note Hamlet's first line. It is not an answer to what the king has said, but a penetrating comment, uttered for his own satisfaction, and suggesting a habit of mind we shall notice again. See whether the first speeches of leading persons in other plays of Shakespeare in any way give a clue to their characters. The following are suggested:

Sir Toby Belch: *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. i, lines 1-3.
Oberon and Titania: *Mid. Night's Dream*, II, i, 60.
Gratiano: *Merchant of Venice*, II, i, 79 (second speech).
Shylock: *Merchant of Venice*, II, i, 1.
Beatrice: *Much Ado*, I, i, 30.
Miranda: *Tempest*, I, ii, 1.
Prince of Wales and Falstaff: *I King Henry IV*, I, ii, 1.
Gloucester: *Richard III*, I, i, 1.
Iago: *Othello*, I, ii, 1.
Cordelia: *King Lear*, I, i, 63.
Lady Macbeth: *Macbeth*, I, v, 16.

If the murder of the elder Hamlet is so important, why does not Shakespeare go back to that to begin his play?

Scene iii. — Another scene of exposition, chiefly of character. What may we expect of Ophelia, in case she has to choose between loyalty to her father and to Hamlet? Laertes and Polonius have both given Ophelia unwelcome advice; which puts it in the least displeasing way? The precepts Polonius gives Laertes are often quoted; are they likely in all cases to make him the most admirable sort of man?

Scene iv. — The indication of place — "The Platform" — was added by Stevens, nearly two hundred years after the play was written. Shakespeare did not even make a scene-division; how do we know he meant us to imagine the platform? How soon do you begin to expect the ghost?

The long discourse about drunkenness in Denmark is evidently put in to give them something to talk about while waiting for the ghost. The Shakespearian audience would probably be interested, as the new queen was a Danish princess; and the Danes, moreover, had an international reputation for drinking. An English traveler had reported that the king at one feast drank thirty-five healths, and had to be carried away in his chair; and a Dane visiting in London was said to have "caroused out of his boot."

Coleridge pointed out that all this puts us off our guard, so that the appearance of the ghost gives us a shock of surprise. From this point on to the end of the scene, what feeling would the audience have? By what steps is this feeling built up?

Scene v. — Properly, not a new scene at all; the action is a direct continuation of scene iv, and the dramatic tension is unbroken. In Shakespeare's theater, Hamlet simply followed the ghost to another part of the stage.

To realize the dramatic effect of the scene, we must try to feel Hamlet's own emotions: dread of the supernatural, which he shared with all the people of his time, but had resolutely put aside; love for his father; suspicion and hatred of his uncle. He is practically silent up to line 85; then his feelings, pent up through the long scene, burst forth. The fantastic, even trivial, way he speaks to Horatio and

Marcellus has been explained by Coleridge as a natural reaction from the terrible experience through which he has just passed, — "to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild translation to the ludicrous, — a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on the flights of delirium." Note the many little touches of tender consideration, both for his father and for his companions; as acted, the courtesy of the exit line, — "Nay, come, let's go *together*" is very affecting.

At the end of Act I, what characters do you feel that you know at all well? What ones will you recognize when they appear again? At what point did the action of the play, as distinguished from the preliminary exposition, begin? Is it yet clear whether the theme of the tragedy is to be an inner mental struggle, or a conflict against outer circumstances, — or are there hints of both? Does the close of the act leave you curious or expectant with regard to later acts? Are your feelings stirred, and if so, how?

Act II, Scene i. — Some time has evidently elapsed between Acts I and II; what has happened meanwhile? Is this scene on the same emotional level as the end of Act I? What indications are there that Polonius is to be played as a comic, or serio-comic, character? Is the audience expected to approve his instructions to Reynaldo? Does the scene lead you to look forward to anything?

Scene ii. — This long scene brings Hamlet and the king into direct opposition. In the first part, the king is moving against Hamlet through Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; in the last part, Hamlet is moving against the king through the players.

In the very guarded speech of the king, lines 1–18, do you see any hint of hostility to Hamlet? The report of the ambassadors, usually omitted, is not very dramatic (why?) but it serves to keep the audience reminded of Fortinbras, so that they will recognize him when he comes in so effectively later. Does it suggest anything about the ability of the king to handle a dangerous situation? How seriously are we expected to take the account Polonius gives of Hamlet's madness? Does the conversation of Hamlet with Polonius throw light on this? Does Hamlet's talk with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

The device of fastening guilt on a murderer by the play presented before him is not original in *Hamlet;* something similar had been used in *The Spanish Tragedy*, and it had become known to the Elizabethan audience. Discussion has arisen regarding the bombastic language of the "rugged Pyrrhus" passage, — whether Hamlet, or Shakespeare, really thought it was fine poetry. But just as the language of poetic drama — of *Hamlet* itself – is in a way unnatural, being lifted above the plane of ordinary talk, so the language of the included tragedy that Hamlet wishes to have acted, must be stilted to a point beyond the genuine tragic style of Shakespeare. When the player recites to Hamlet, it sounds as dignified and free from affectation as Hamlet says it is.

At what points is the scene with the players tied up to the main action? How far has Act II advanced this action, in the external struggle of the king against Hamlet, and the inner struggle in Hamlet's own mind? As the act closes, who seems to be ahead?

Act III, Scene i. — This scene carries forward the king's counter-attack on Hamlet. The spying of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern has failed; the king now tries spying for himself. Does he learn anything, and does he form any plans based on what he learns? Is the scene wholly a victory for the king, or does Hamlet score also?

According to stage convention, Hamlet's soliloquy reveals the true state of his mind. His own troubles — so heavy as to make death a welcome thought — he takes as a symbol of all griefs that afflict mankind, and so he becomes spokesman for the unhappy and wronged, everywhere. It is this generalizing habit of mind, this habit of speaking for the world at large, that lifts Hamlet to the position he holds in the world of thought.

The scene with Ophelia is hard to understand without bearing in mind the overwrought emotions of all the characters. Ophelia, grieved at the sad state to which, as she thinks, Hamlet's love for her has brought him, is in her simple-minded way following her father's instructions as to how he may be restored. Hamlet's talk seems to her first a bewildering puzzle, then sheer madness. Hamlet, when she enters, is sick with despair over the evils of the world; this is no world for happiness or love; men, women, himself even, are evil.

The break with Ophelia, begun earlier, must be completed. Then comes the discovery of Polonius in hiding; Ophelia lies about it: she must be as false as all women, — as his mother.

After this intensely passionate scene, does the marked coolness of Polonius and the king in any way affect your sympathies?

Scene ii. — Whose move in the game is it now? Note how fully Hamlet is in control of himself in spite of the coming crises; he not only coaches the players in the scene he has inserted in their play, but gives them an excellent lecture on the art of acting in general. Why does Shakespeare have him expound at such length his confidence in Horatio?

The arrangement of the Elizabethan stage was well adapted to the presentation of a "play within the play;" it could be given on the inner stage beyond the traverse, or possibly on the balcony. The "dumb-show" or pantomime giving the plot in outline was common in earlier dramas.

What steps does Hamlet take to keep the king's attention on the play? As usually acted, these points are emphasized by his pointing at the king, creeping from his place by Ophelia across the stage, to confront him; shaking his accusing finger in the king's face, etc.

What point in the scene marks the height of Hamlet's triumph? Do you feel the king's influence attempting to reassert itself?

Scene iii. — From the opening speeches, what change has taken place in the king since Scene ii? Who now holds the balance of power, the king or Hamlet? What plan is now on foot regarding Hamlet, and how far are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern involved? Note the frequent mention of haste; what effect has this on your feeling when Hamlet reappears?

In the king's soliloquy, note how careful Shakespeare is to have the king explain just how his horror at his own crime falls short of true repentance; what is the difference?

In Hamlet's soliloquy, to feel the situation dramatically we must go back in imagination to an age when blood-vengeance for a father killed was a sacred duty; when it was felt to be quite right to wish wicked men to be sent to hell; and when it was firmly believed that what a man happened to be doing at the moment of his death out-

weighed his customary life in determining where he was to go. Hamlet's line of thought must be taken as perfectly natural for his times—neither brutal nor dilatory. Granted this, does he interpret the king's state of mind correctly? Does it make much difference in the drama whether Hamlet kills the king just at this time or not?

Scene iv. — This scene is a great battle of mind and emotions. The queen intends to be the accuser; how long does she remain so? Has the killing of Polonius any effect on the rest of the scene? Or is it merely a regrettable incident? Why is Hamlet so ready to stab, and so indifferent about it afterwards? What kind of argument does Hamlet bring to bear on his mother? Is her penitence real, or false like the king's? How may we expect her to behave through the rest of the play? Would the scene be so effective for the audience without the ghost?

Is the secret plot of the king against Hamlet advanced or retarded in this scene?

Why does Hamlet drag off the body?

Act IV, Scene i. — In the opening speeches, does the queen keep or betray Hamlet's secret? Note the king's condition; he is not wholly sure of himself, and the audience is kept in suspense as to how the balance is going to turn.

Scene ii. — The hiding of the body here and in Scene iii comes from the original old Danish tale, in which Amleth not merely conceals the body but chops it up and throws it to the pigs. Shakespeare toned the incident down till it was acceptable to the rather brutal taste of his audiences; modern taste prefers to omit it wholly. Does it advance the action, or heighten the central interest of the play?

Scene iii. — Does this scene accomplish anything beyond advancing the story one step?

Scene iv. — In the quartos, the stage direction is "Enter Fortinbras with his army over the stage." Account for the change by reference to stage conditions. The folio omitted this scene, probably representing the play as acted in Shakespeare's later years. Why was it dropped from the acted play? Why did Shakespeare write it?

Scene v. — When acted, this is one of the most pathetic scenes in all Shakespeare. Note how the breakdown of Ophelia's mind leaves

her still full of tenderness and courtesy and affection. Her songs are not by Shakespeare, but are bits of old traditional folk song; the old tunes are given in Furness's *Variorum*, Vol. I, pp. 330 and 333. At what time in her life would Ophelia have been likely to learn these songs? Of what else in the scene would this have been true?

Does the appearance of Ophelia serve any other dramatic purpose than to make the audience sorry? Why have her come in twice? In respect to dramatic effect, compare this scene with that of Fortinbras, just preceding; together, they lead the audience to expect what?

Scene vi. — How much time has elapsed since we saw Hamlet last? The pirate adventure was a familiar part of the traditional Hamlet story, so the audience would probably expect it. Is it necessary to Shakespeare's development of the play?

Scene vii. — Clearly, this is a continuation of Scene v. What has the king supposedly been telling Laertes while the audience watched Horatio in Scene vi? Why not let the audience hear it all? The main object of this scene is to turn Laertes into an instrument with which the king can strike down Hamlet. What are the various things that work on his mind? Why is the death of Ophelia brought in at the end?

Act V, Scene i. — What dramatic expectation aroused in Act IV is fulfilled in this scene?

The part of the First Clown is often taken by great actors; Coquelin, for instance, one of the greatest of recent French actors, took it. Do you see anything in the part besides foolery? How early in the scene do you know whose grave is being dug? Does Hamlet know as soon as you do? What is there about the clown that makes Hamlet enjoy talking to him? Try to account for the actions of Hamlet and Laertes at the end of the scene. When does Hamlet remember to pretend that he is insane?

Scene ii. — This scene has four distinct movements, with a different emotional tone to each. What are they?

What earlier scene prepared for the conversation between Horatio and Hamlet? In what ways does Hamlet appear more resolute than before, and how can we account for the fact? What effect have lines 71–3 in bringing on a sense of the impending action?

The conversation with Osric, usually cut down or omitted in modern productions, must have been highly amusing to an Elizabethan audience, who would recognize the take-off on the affected language then fashionable at court.

In lines 221–3, appears the common dramatic device of a foreboding of evil; have you noted it in *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, or other plays? What is the effect on the audience?

In preparing for the fencing match, how does Hamlet show that, as the king said, he is "most generous and free from all contriving?" Note the devices for calling the attention of the audience to the poisoned sword and cup. Several unexpected things seem to give Hamlet a chance of escaping from the treacherous plot; what are they?

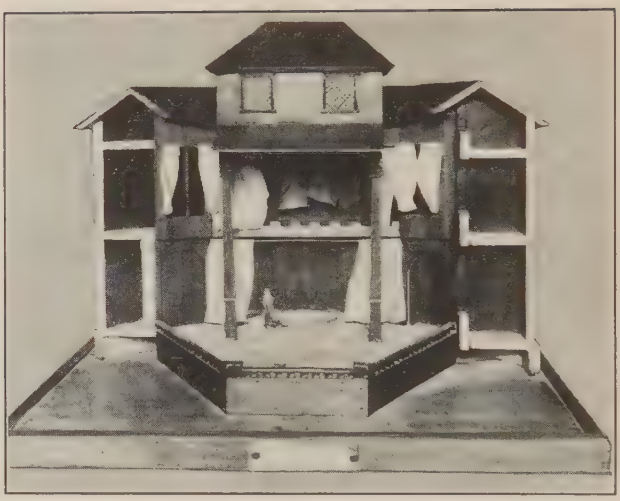
Actors arrange the exchange of rapiers in various ways. Sometimes both lose their swords, and pick up each others' without noticing the exchange. More usually, Hamlet, feeling the wound, realizes the treachery, disarms Laertes, and secures his sword, offering him his own instead.

In some productions, the play stops with Hamlet's death. From the stage arrangements in Shakespeare's time, why was the Fortinbras scene necessary? On the modern stage, can you see how it would add to the impressiveness of the play?

After completing the study of the play, what scenes, speeches, or single lines give you the strongest sense of power, and why?

THE TEXT

The text of this edition is based primarily on the Second (1604) Quarto, with such passages as were added in the First Folio, and occasional preferred readings from that edition. Participial *-ed* is, as in the early editions, contracted to *'d* when non-syllabic; where printed *-ed* it is to be pronounced as a separate syllable.



A TYPICAL SHAKESPEARIAN STAGE

A photograph of a model based on the conjectural reconstruction of Victor E. Albright, Ph. D., and published with his consent. (See Albright: *The Shakespearian Stage*, New York, 1909.)

Note the platform projecting into the yard, the doors and curtained windows right and left, the curtained balcony, the rear stage shut off by a "traverse."

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

PERSONS REPRESENTED

CLAUDIUS, *King of* Denmark.
HAMLET, *son to the late, and nephew to the present* King.
POLONIUS, *Lord Chamberlain.*
HORATIO, *friend to* Hamlet.
LAERTES, *son to* Polonius.
VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, OSRIC, } *courtiers.*
A Gentleman.
A Priest.
MARCELLUS, BERNARDO, } *officers.*
FRANCISCO, *a soldier.*
REYNALDO, *servant to* Polonius.
Players.
Two Clowns, *grave-diggers.*
FORTINBRAS, *Prince of* Norway.
A Captain.
English Ambassadors.
GERTRUDE, *Queen of* Denmark, *and mother to* Hamlet.
OPHELIA, *daughter to* Polonius.
Ghost of Hamlet's *father.*
Lords, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Sailors, Messengers, and other Attendants.

SCENE — ELSINORE.

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

ACT I

Scene I

Elsinore. A Platform before the Castle

Francisco *at his post. Enter to him* Bernardo

Ber. Who's there?
Fran. Nay, answer me. Stand and unfold yourself.
Ber. Long live the king!
Fran. Bernardo?
Ber. He.
Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.
Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.
Fran. For this relief much thanks; 'tis bitter cold,
And I am sick at heart.
Ber. Have you had quiet guard?
Fran. Not a mouse stirring.
Ber. Well, good night.
If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus,
The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter Horatio *and* Marcellus

Fran. I think I hear them. Stand ho! Who is there?
Hor. Friends to this ground.
Mar. And liegemen to the Dane.
Fran. Give you good night.
Mar. O, farewell, honest soldier,
Who hath reliev'd you?
Fran. Bernardo has my place.
Give you good night. [*Exit*
Mar. Holla! Bernardo!
Ber. Say,
What, is Horatio there?
Hor. A piece of him.
Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.
Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?
Ber. I have seen nothing.
Mar. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us;
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.
Hor. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.
Ber. Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.
Ber. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one, —

Enter GHOST

Mar. Peace, break thee off; look, where it comes again!
Ber. In the same figure, like the king that's dead.
Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.
Ber. Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.
Hor. Most like; it harrows me with fear and wonder.
Ber. It would be spoke to.
Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.
Hor. What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form
In which the Majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march? By heaven I charge thee speak!
Mar. It is offended.
Ber. See, it stalks away.
Hor. Stay, speak, speak! I charge thee, speak!
[*Exit* GHOST
Mar. 'Tis gone, and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble and look pale.
Is not this something more than fantasy?
What think you on't?
Hor. Before my God, I might not this believe
Without the sensible and true avouch
Of mine own eyes.
Mar. Is it not like the king?
Hor. As thou art to thyself.
Such was the very armor he had on
When he the ambitous Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when, in an angry parle,
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
'Tis strange.
Mar. Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour,
With martial stalk hath he gone by our watch.
Hor. In what particular thought to work I know not;
But, in the gross and scope of mine opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.
Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me, he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week;
What might be toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint-laborer with the day;
Who is't that can inform me?
Hor. That can I.
At least the whisper goes so; our last king,
Whose image even but now appear'd to us,
Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto prickt on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet —
For so this side of our known world esteem'd him —
Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by a seal'd compact,
Well ratified by law and heraldry,
Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands
Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:
Against the which, a moiety competent
Was gaged by our king; which had return'd
To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
Had he been vanquisher; as, by the same covenant
And carriage of the article design'd,
His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
Of unimproved mettle hot and full,
Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
Shark'd up a list of lawless resolutes,
For food and diet, to some enterprise
That hath a stomach in't; which is no other —
As it doth well appear unto our state —
But to recover of us, by strong hand
And terms compulsatory, those foresaid lands
So by his father lost; and this, I take it,
Is the main motive of our preparations,

The source of this our watch, and the chief head
Of this post-haste and romage in the land.
Ber. I think it be no other but e'en so:
Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.
Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.
In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star —
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like precurse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Re-enter Ghost

But soft, behold! Lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
[*It spreads its arms.*
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me:
If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
Speak to me:

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
O, speak!
Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
[*Cock crows*
Speak of it: stay, and speak! Stop it, Marcellus.
Mar. Shall I strike at it with my partisan?
Hor. Do, if it will not stand.
Ber. 'Tis here!
Hor. 'Tis here!
Mar. 'Tis gone! [*Exit* GHOST
We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery.
Ber. It was about to speak, when the cock crew.
Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.
Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,

The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is that time.

Hor. So have I heard and do in part believe it.
But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill:
Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet; for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
Do you consent we shall acquaint him with it,
As needful in our loves, fitting our duty?

Mar. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
Where we shall find him most conveniently.

[*Exeunt*

Scene II

A Room of State in the Castle

Flourish. Enter the King, Queen, Hamlet, Polonius, Laertes, Voltimand, Cornelius, Lords, *and* Attendants

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him,

Together with remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
The imperial jointress of this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy, —
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole, —
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along; — for all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know: young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth,
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame,
Colleaguèd with the dream of his advantage,
He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father, with all bonds of law,
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
Thus much the business is; we have here writ
To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras, —
Who, impotent and bed-rid, scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose, — to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists, and full proportions, are all made
Out of his subject; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power

To business with the king more than the scope
Of these dilated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.

Cor., Vol. In that and all things will we show our duty.

King. We doubt it nothing; heartily farewell.

[*Exeunt* Voltimand *and* Cornelius

And now, Laertes, what's the news with you?
You told us of some suit; what is't, Laertes?
You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice; what wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The head is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than is the throne of Denmark to thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread lord,
Your leave and favor to return to France;
From whence though willingly I came to Denmark
To show my duty in your coronation,
Yet now, I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? What says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laborsome petition, and at last
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent:
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes; time be thine,
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.
But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son, —
Ham. [*Aside*] (A little more than kin, and less than kind.)
King. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
Ham. Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun.
Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted color off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.
Ham Ay, madam, it is common.
Queen. If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?
Ham. Seems, madam! nay, it is; I know not seems.
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passes show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.
King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father;
But, you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do obsequious sorrow: but to perséver
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense.
Why should we in our peevish opposition
Take it to heart? Fie! 'tis a fault to heaven,
A fault against the dead, a fault to nature,
To reason most absurd, whose common theme
Is death of fathers, and who still hath cried,
From the first corse till he that died to-day,
"This must be so." We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe, and think of us
As of a father; for let the world take note,
You are the most immediate to our throne,
And with no less nobility of love,
Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet;
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg.
Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.
King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell,
And the king's rouse the heaven shall bruit again,
Re-speaking earthly thunder. Come away.
[*Flourish. Exeunt all but* Hamlet
Ham. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! O God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two;
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month, —

Let me not think on't, — Frailty, thy name is
woman! —
A little month! or e'er those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears; — why she, even she, —
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer, — married with mine
uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules; within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married: — O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not nor it cannot come to good;
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!

Enter Horatio, Marcellus, *and* Bernardo

Hor. Hail to your lordship!
Ham. I am glad to see you well:
Horatio, or I do forget myself.
Hor. The same, my lord, and your poor servant ever.
Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name
with you.
And what make you from Wittenberg, Horatio?
Marcellus?
Mar. My good lord.
Ham. I am very glad to see you. [*To* Bernardo.]
Good even, sir. —
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my lord.
Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so,
Nor shall you do my ear that violence,
To make it truster of your own report
Against yourself: I know you are no truant.
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.
Hor. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
Ham. I pray thee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
Hor. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.
Ham. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio!
My father, — methinks I see my father.
Hor. Where, my lord?
Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.
Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.
Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.
Hor. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.
Ham. Saw? who?
Hor. My lord, the king your father.
Ham. The king my father!
Hor. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver,
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Ham. For God's love, let me hear.
Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
In the dead vast and middle of the night,
Been thus encounter'd. A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-à-pé,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd
By their oppresst and fear-surprisèd eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes: I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.
Ham. But where was this?
Mar. My lord, upon the platform where we watch.
Ham. Did you not speak to it?
Hor. My lord, I did;
But answer made it none; yet once methought,
It lifted up it head and did address
Itself to motion, like as it would speak;
But even then the morning cock crew loud,
And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanisht from our sight.
Ham. 'Tis very strange.
Hor. As I do live, my honor'd lord, 'tis true;

And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.
Ham. Indeed, indeed, sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?
Mar., Ber. We do, my lord.
Ham. Arm'd say you?
Mar., Ber. Arm'd, my lord.
Ham. From top to toe?
Mar., Ber. My lord, from head to foot.
Ham. Then saw you not his face?
Hor. O, yes, my lord; he wore his beaver up.
Ham. What, lookt he frowningly?
Hor. A countenance more in sorrow than in anger.
Ham. Pale, or red?
Hor. Nay, very pale.
Ham. And fixt his eyes upon you?
Hor. Most constantly.
Ham. I would I had been there.
Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.
Ham. Very like, very like. — Stay'd it long?
Hor. While one with moderate haste might tell a hundred.
Mar., Ber. Longer, longer.
Hor. Not when I saw't.
Ham. His beard was grizzl'd? no?
Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.
Ham. I will watch to-night;
Perchance 'twill walk again.
Hor. I warrant it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be tenable in your silence still;
And whatsoever else shall hap to-night
Give it an understanding, but no tongue;
I will requite your loves. So fare you well:
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve,
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your honor.

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you; farewell.

[*Exeunt* Horatio, Marcellus, *and* Bernardo

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul: foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

[*Exit*

Scene III

A Room in Polonius's *House*

Enter Laertes *and* Ophelia

Laer. My necessaries are embark'd; farewell;
And, sister, as the winds give benefit
And convoy is assistant, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood,

A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;
No more.

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more.

For nature crescent does not grow alone
In thews and bulk, but as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now,
And now no soil nor cautel doth besmirch
The virtue of his will; but you must fear,
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;
For he himself is subject to his birth;
He may not, as unvalued persons do,
Carve for himself, for on his choice depends
The safety and the health of this whole state;
And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
Unto the voice and yielding of that body
Whereof he is the head. Then if he says he loves you,
It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
As he in his particular act and place
May give his saying deed; which is no further
Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
Then weigh what loss your honor may sustain
If with too credent ear you list his songs,
Or lose your heart, or your chaste treasure open
To his unmaster'd importunity.
Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,

And keep you in the rear of your affection,
Out of the shot and danger of desire.
The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes;
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear;
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.
Oph. I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own rede.
Laer. O, fear me not.
I stay too long;—but here my father comes.

Enter Polonius

A double blessing is a double grace;
Occasion smiles upon a second leave.
Pol. Yet here, Laertes! aboard, aboard, for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are stay'd for. There; my blessing with thee!
[*Laying his hand on* Laertes' *head*
And these few precepts in thy memory
See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice:
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not exprest in fancy; rich, not gaudy;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man;
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all: to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell; my blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly do I take my leave, my lord.

Pol. The time invites you; go, your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well
What I have said to you.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [*Exit*

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touching the Lord Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought:
'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you, and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so, — as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution, — I must tell you
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behooves my daughter and your honor.
What is between you? Give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection! pooh! you speak like a green girl,
Unsifted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you: think yourself a baby,
That you have ta'en these tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or — not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Running it thus — you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My lord, he hath importun'd me with love
In honorable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call it; go to, go to.

Oph. And hath given countenance to his speech, my lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heaven.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul

Lends the tongue vows; these blazes, daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in their promise, as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time
Be something scanter of your maiden presence;
Set your entreatments at a higher rate
Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
Believe so much in him, that he is young,
And with a larger tether may he walk
Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers
Not of that dye which their investments show,
But mere implorators of unholy suits.
This is for all, —
I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so slander any moment's leisure,
As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet.
Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.

Oph. I shall obey, my lord. [*Exeunt*

SCENE IV

The Platform

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, *and* MARCELLUS

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.
Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.
Ham. What hour now?
Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.
Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. Indeed? I heard it not; it then draws near
the season
Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.
[*A flourish of Trumpets, and two pieces go off*
What does this mean, my lord?
Ham. The king doth wake to-night and takes his
rouse,
Keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels;
And, as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,
The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out
The triumph of his pledge.
Hor. Is it a custom?
Ham. Ay, marry, is't:
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honor'd in the breach than the observance.
This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations:
They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase
Soil our addition; and indeed it takes
From our achievements, though perform'd at
height,
The pith and marrow of our attribute.
So, oft it chances in particular men,
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,
As in their birth, — wherein they are not guilty,
Since nature cannot choose his origin, —
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,
Or by some habit that too much o'er-leavens

The form of plausive manners, that these men,
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
Being nature's livery, or fortune's star,—
Their virtues else — be they as pure as grace,
As infinite as man may undergo —
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault: the dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt,
To his own scandal.

Enter Ghost

Hor. Look, my lord, it comes.

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father; royal Dane, O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher,
Wherein we saw thee quietly in-urn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature,
So horridly to shake our disposition,

With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?
[GHOST *beckons* HAMLET
Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
To you alone.
Mar. Look, with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground:
But do not go with it.
Hor. No, by no means.
Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.
Hor. Do not, my lord.
Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again; I'll follow it.
Hor. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
And draw you into madness? Think of it;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath.
Ham. It waves me still.
Go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my lord.
Ham. Hold off your hands!
Hor. Be rul'd; you shall not go.
Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd. Unhand me, gentlemen;
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!
I say, away! — Go on; I'll follow thee.
[*Exeunt* GHOST *and* HAMLET
Hor. He waxes desperate with imagination.
Mar. Let's follow; 'tis not fit thus to obey him.
Hor. Have after. To what issue will this come?
Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.
Hor. Heaven will direct it.
Mar. Nay, let's follow him.
[*Exeunt*

SCENE V

Another part of the Platform

Enter GHOST *and* HAMLET

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? Speak; I'll go no further.
Ghost. Mark me.
Ham. I will.
Ghost. My hour is almost come
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.
Ham. Alas, poor ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
Ham. Speak; I am bound to hear.
Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.
Ham. What?
Ghost. I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confin'd to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
But this eternal blazon must not be
To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love,
Ham. O God!
Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
Ham. Murder?
Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.
Ham. Haste me to know't, that I, with wings as swift
As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf,
Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death
Rankly abus'd; but know thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Ham. O my prophetic soul!
My uncle?
Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,
— O wicked wit and gifts that have the power
So to seduce! — won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen;
O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there!
From me, whose love was of that dignity
That it went hand in hand even with the vow
I made to her in marriage; and to decline
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine!
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always in the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect

Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body;
And with a sudden vigor it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood: so did it mine;
And a most instant tetter barked about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,
All my smooth body.
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.
Oh, horrible! Oh, horrible! most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
But, howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire;
Adieu, adieu; remember me. [*Exit*

Ham. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? — Oh, fie! Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there;
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmixed with baser matter: yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman,
O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
My tables, — meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word;
It is "Adieu, adieu! remember me."
I have sworn't.

Hor. [*Within*] My lord, my lord!

Mar. [*Within*] Lord Hamlet!

Hor. [*Within*] Heaven secure him!

Ham. So be it!

Hor. [*Within*] Illo, ho, ho, my lord!

Ham. Hillo, ho, ho, boy! come, bird, come.

Enter Horatio *and* Marcellus

Mar. How is't, my noble lord?

Hor. What news, my lord?

Ham. O, wonderful!

Hor. Good my lord, tell it.

Ham. No; you will reveal it.

Hor. Not I, my lord, by heaven.
Mar. Nor I, my lord.
Ham. How say you then; would heart of man once think it,—
But you'll be secret?
Hor., Mar. Ay, by heaven, my lord.
Ham. There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
But he's an arrant knave.
Hor. There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave
To tell us this.
Ham. Why, right, you are in the right,
And so without more circumstance at all
I hold it fit that we shake hands and part;
You, as your business and desire shall point you,
For every man has business and desire
Such as it is, and for mine own poor part,
Look you, I'll go pray.
Hor. These are but wild and whirling words, my lord.
Ham. I am sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, faith, heartily.
Hor. There's no offense, my lord.
Ham. Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio,
And much offense too. Touching this vision here,
It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you;
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'ermaster it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my lord? We will.
Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.
Hor., Mar. My lord, we will not.
Ham. Nay, but swear't.
Hor. In faith,
My lord, not I.
Mar. Nor I, my lord, in faith.
Ham. Upon my sword.
Mar. We have sworn, my lord, already.
Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.
Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.
Ham. Ah, ha, boy! say'st thou so? art thou there, true-penny? —
Come on; you hear this fellow in the cellarage;
Consent to swear.
Hor. Propose the oath, my lord.
Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen
Swear by my sword.
Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.
Ham. *Hic et ubique?* then we'll shift our ground.
Come hither, gentlemen,
And lay your hands again upon my sword:
Never to speak of this that you have heard
Swear by my sword.
Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.
Ham. Well said, old mole! canst work i' the ground so fast?
A worthy pioner! — Once more remove, good friends.
Hor. O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of n your philosophy.
But come;
Here, as before, never, so help you mercy,
How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,
As I perchance hereafter shall think meet
To put an antic disposition on,
That you, at such times seeing me, never shall,
With arms encumber'd thus, or this headshake,
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As "Well, well, we know"; or, "We could, an if we would";
Or "If we list to speak"; or "There be, an if they might";
Or such ambiguous giving out, to note
That you know aught of me, — this not to do,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you,
Swear.

Ghost. [*Beneath*] Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! [*They swear*] So, gentlemen,
With all my love I do commend me to you:
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
May do, to express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!
Nay, come, let's go together. [*Exeunt*

Lapse of 2 mo.

ACT II

SCENE I

A Room in Polonius's House

Enter POLONIUS *and* REYNALDO

Pol. Give him this money and these notes, Reynaldo.

Rey. I will, my lord.

Pol. You shall do marvelous wisely, good Reynaldo,
Before you visit him, to make inquiry
Of his behavior.

Rey. My lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said, very well said. Look you, sir,
Inquire me first what Danskers are in Paris;
And how, and who; what means, and where they keep;
What company, at what expense; and finding
By this encompassment and drift of question
That they do know my son, come you more nearer
Than your particular demands will touch it:
Take you, as 'twere, some distant knowledge of him;
As thus, "I know his father and his friends,
And in part him." Do you mark this, Reynaldo?

Rey. Ah, very well, my lord.

Pol. "And in part him; but," you may say, "not well:
But if't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so"; and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonor him; take heed of that;
But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.
Rey. As gaming, my lord.
Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing, quarrelling,
Drabbing; you may go so far.
Rey. My lord, that would dishonor him.
Pol. 'Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge.
You must not put another scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency;
That's not my meaning; but breathe his faults so quaintly
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.
Rey. But, my good lord, —
Pol. Wherefore should you do this?
Rey. Ay, my lord,
I would know that.
Pol. Marry, sir, here's my drift,
And, I believe, it is a fetch of wit:
You laying these slight sullies on my son,

As 'twere a thing a little soil'd with working,
Mark you,
Your party in converse, him you would sound,
Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes
The youth you breathe of guilty, be assur'd
He closes with you in this consequence;
"Good sir," or so, or "friend," or "gentleman,"
According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country,
Rey. Very good, my lord.
Pol. And then, sir, does he this, — he does —
What was I about to say?
By the mass, I was about to say something; — where did I leave?
Rey. At "closes in the consequence," at "friend or so," and "gentleman."
Pol. At "closes in the consequence," ay, marry;
He closes with you thus: I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or th'other day,
Or then, or then; with such or such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in 's rouse,
There falling out at tennis; or so forth.
See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:
So, by my former lecture and advice,
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?
Rey. My lord, I have.

Pol. God buy ye; fare you well.
Rey. Good my lord.
Pol. Observe his inclination in yourself.
Rey. I shall, my lord.
Pol. And let him ply his music.
Rey. Well, my lord.
Pol. Farewell! — [*Exit* Reynaldo

Enter Ophelia

How now, Ophelia! what's the matter?
Oph. Oh, my lord, my lord, I have been so affrighted!
Pol. With what, in the name of God?
Oph. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyved to his ankle,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport
As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors, — he comes before me.
Pol. Mad for thy love?
Oph. My lord, I do not know,
But, truly, I do fear it.
Pol. What said he?
Oph. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long time stayed he so;

At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh so piteous and profound
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last bended their light on me.
Pol. Come, go with me, I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself,
And leads the will to desperate undertakings
As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
Oph. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters and denied
His access to me.
Pol. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted him: I fear'd he did but trifle
And meant to wreck thee; but, beshrew my jealousy!
By heaven, it is as proper to our age
To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions
As it is common for the younger sort
To lack discretion. Come, go we to the king:
This must be known; which, being kept close, might move
More grief to hide than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt*

Scene II

A Room in the Castle

Flourish. Enter King, Queen, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and* Attendants

King. Welcome, dear Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern!
Moreover that we much did long to see you,
The need we have to use you did provoke
Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
Since not the exterior nor the inward man
Resembles that it was. What it should be,
More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
So much from the understanding of himself,
I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And sith so neighbor'd to his youth and humor,
That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasions you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
That, open'd, lies within our remedy.
Queen. Good gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
And sure I am two men there are not living
To whom he more adheres. If it will please you

To show us so much gentry and good will
As to expend your time with us awhile,
For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks
As fits a king's remembrance.

Ros. Both your majesties
Might, by the sovereign power you have of us,
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey;
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent
To lay our service freely at your feet,
To be commanded.

King. Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit
My too much changed son. Go, some of you,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heavens make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him!

Queen. Ay, amen!

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, *and some* Attendants

Enter POLONIUS

Pol. The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,
I hold my duty as I hold my soul,
Both to my God and to my gracious king;
And I do think, or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As it hath us'd to do, that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.
King. Oh, speak of that; that do I long to hear.
Pol. Give first admittance to the ambassadors;
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.
King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[*Exit* Polonius

He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.
Queen. I doubt it is no other but the main,
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.
King. Well, we shall sift him.

Re-enter Polonius *with* Voltimand *and* Cornelius

Welcome, my good friends!
Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?
Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.
Upon our first, he sent out to suppress
His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd
To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack,
But, better look'd into, he truly found
It was against your highness: whereat griev'd,
That so his sickness, age, and impotence
Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrests

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys,
Receives rebuke from Norway, and, in fine,
Makes vow before his uncle never more
To give the assay of arms against your majesty.
Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,
Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee,
And his commission to employ those soldiers
So levied, as before, against the Polack:
With an entreaty, herein further shown,
[*Gives a paper*
That it might please you to give quiet pass
Through your dominions for this enterprise,
On such regards of safety and allowance
As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;
And at our more consider'd time we'll read,
Answer, and think upon this business.
Meantime we thank you for your well-took labor.
Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together.
Most welcome home!
[*Exeunt* VOLTIMAND *and* CORNELIUS

Pol. This business is well ended.
My liege, and madam, to expostulate
What majesty should be, what duty is,
Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief. Your noble son is mad:
Mad call I it; for, to define true madness,

What is't but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.

Queen. More matter, with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true; a foolish figure;
But farewell it, for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect defective comes by cause.
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.
Perpend.
I have a daughter, — have, while she is mine, —
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath given me this; now gather and surmise.

[Reads] To the celestial and my soul's idol, the most beautified Ophelia, —

That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase; "*beautified*" is a vile phrase; but you shall hear. Thus:

[Reads] In her excellent white bosom, these, etc.

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good madam, stay awhile; I will be faithful.

[Reads] Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love.

O dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not art to

reckon my groans: but that I love thee best, O most best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,

Hamlet.

This in obedience hath my daughter shown me:
And more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she
Receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honorable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think,
When I had seen this hot love on the wing, —
As I perceived it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me, — what might you,
Or my dear majesty, your queen here, think,
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak;
"Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star,
This must not be;" and then I prescripts gave her
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed, a short tale to make,

Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.
King. Do you think 'tis this?
Queen. It may be, very like.
Pol. Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know that,
That I have positively said, "'Tis so,"
When it prov'd otherwise?
King. Not that I know.
Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.
[*Pointing to his head and shoulder*
If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the center.
King. How may we try it further?
Pol. You know, sometimes he walks four hours together
Here in the lobby.
Queen. So he does, indeed.
Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him;
Be you and I behind an arras then;
Mark the encounter; if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fallen thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.
King. We will try it.

Queen. But look where sadly the poor wretch comes reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away;
I'll board him presently.

[*Exeunt* King, Queen, *and* Attendants

Oh, give me leave,

Enter Hamlet, *reading*

How does my good lord Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God-'a-mercy.

Pol. Do you know me, my lord?

Ham. Excellent well; you're a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion, — Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my lord. [*Aside*] Still harping on my daughter: yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger; he is far gone, far gone; and truly in my youth I suffer'd much extremity for love; very near this. I'll speak to him again. What do you read, my lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my lord?

Ham. Between who?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my lord.

Ham. Slanders, sir: for the satirical rogue says here that old men have gray beards; that their faces are wrinkl'd, their eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit, together with most weak hams. All which, sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honesty to have it thus set down; for you yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. [*Aside*] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't. — Will you walk out of the air, my lord?

Ham. Into my grave?

Pol. Indeed, that is out o' the air. — [*Aside*] How pregnant sometimes his replies are! a happiness that often madness hits on, which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be deliver'd of. I will leave him, and suddenly contrive the means of meeting between him and my daughter. — My honorable lord, I will most humbly take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more willingly part withal; except my life, except my life, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Enter Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Pol. You go to seek the lord Hamlet; there he is.

Ros. [*To* Polonius] God save you, sir!

[*Exit* Polonius

Guil. My honor'd lord!

Ros. My most dear lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern? Ah, Rosencrantz? Good lads, how do you both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not over-happy;
On Fortune's cap we are not the very button.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favors? What's the news?

Ros. None, my lord; but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good friends, deserv'd at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my lord?

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of the worst.

Ros. We think not so, my lord.

Ham. Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one; 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. O God, I could be bounded in a nut shell and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly; and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars bodies; and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes the beggars' shadows. Shall we to the court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Ros., Guil. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest of my servants; for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?

Ros. To visit you, my lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you: and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a half penny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come; deal justly with me: come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my lord?

Ham. Why, anything, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to color; I know the good king and queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my lord?

Ham. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for, or no.

Ros. [*Aside to* GUILDENSTERN] What say you?

Ham. [*Aside*] Nay, then, I have an eye of you; if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, — but wherefore I know not, — lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises: and, indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh then, when I said "Man delights not me?"

Ros. To think, my lord, if you delight not in man, what Lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you; we coted them on the way; and hither are they coming, to offer your service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. — What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take such delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so follow'd?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? Do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavor keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, sir, an aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapp'd for't: these are now the fashion; and so

berattle the common stages — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither.

Ham. What, are they children? Who maintains 'em? How are they escoted? Will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players — as it is most like, if their means are no better, — their writers do them wrong, to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Ros. 'Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy; there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is't possible?

Guil. Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my lord; Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not very strange; for my uncle is king of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece, for his picture in little. There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out. [*Flourish of trumpets within*

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinore. Your hands, come; the appurtenance of welcome is

fashion and ceremony; let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players, which, I tell you, must show fairly outward, should more appear like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceived.

Guil. In what, my dear lord?

Ham. I am but mad north-north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw.

Enter Polonius

Pol. Well be with you, gentlemen!

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too, at each ear a hearer: that great baby you see there is not yet out of his swaddling-clouts.

Ros. Happily he is the second time come to them, for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy he comes to tell me of the players; mark it. — You say right, sir; a Monday morning; 'twas then, indeed.

Pol. My lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My lord, I have news to tell you. When Roscius was an actor in Rome, —

Pol. The actors are come hither, my lord.

Ham. Buz, buz!

Pol. Upon my honor, —

Ham. Then came each actor on his ass, —

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca

cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. O Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my lord?

Ham. Why —

> One fair daughter, and no more,
> The which he loved passing well.

Pol. [*Aside*] Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' the right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my lord?

Ham. Why,

> As by lot, God wot,

and then, you know,

> It came to pass, as most like it was, —

The first row of the pious chanson will show you more, for look, where my abridgment comes.

Enter four or five Players

You are welcome, masters; welcome, all. I am glad to see thee well. Welcome, good friends. O, my old friend! Thy face is valanc'd since I saw thee last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? What! my young lady and mistress! By-'r-lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the

altitude of a chopine. Pray God, your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring. Masters, you are all welcome. We'll e'en to't like French falconers, fly at anything we see; we'll have a speech straight; come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

1 *Play.* What speech, my lord?

Ham. I heard thee speak me a speech once, but it was never acted; or, if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million; 'twas caviare to the general; but it was, — as I received it, and others, whose judgments in such matters cried in the top of mine, — an excellent play, well digested in the scenes; set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember, one said there were no sallets in the lines, to make the matter savory; nor no matter in the phrase that might indict the author of affectation; but called it an honest method, as wholesome as sweet, and by very much more handsome than fine. One speech in it I chiefly loved: 'twas Æneas' tale to Dido; and thereabout of it especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line; let me see, let me see; —

> The rugged Pyrrhus like the Hyrcanian beast.—

'tis not so; it begins with Pyrrhus: —

> The rugged Pyrrhus, he, whose sable arms,
> Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
> When he lay couched in the ominous horse,
> Hath now this dread and black complexion smear'd

With heraldry more dismal: head to foot
Now is he total gules; horridly tricked
With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
Baked and impasted with the parching streets,
That lend a tyrannous and damned light
To their lord's murder; roasted in wrath and fire,
And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
Old grandsire Priam seeks.

So proceed you.

Pol. 'Fore God, my lord, well spoken, with good accent and good discretion.

1 Play. Anon he finds him
Striking too short at Greeks; his antique sword,
Rebellious to his arm, lies where it falls,
Repugnant to command; unequal match'd,
Pyrrhus at Priam drives; in rage strikes wide;
But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword
The unnerved father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear: for, lo! his sword,
Which was declining on the milky head
Of reverend Priam, seemed i' the air to stick:
So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood:
And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
Did nothing.
But, as we often see, against some storm,
A silence in the heavens, the rack stand still,
The bold wind speechless, and the orb below
As hush as death, anon the dreadful thunder
Doth rend the region; so, after Pyrrhus' pause,
Aroused vengeance sets him new a-work;

And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
On Mars's armor forg'd for proof eterne,
With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
Now falls on Priam. —
Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! All you gods,
In general synod, take away her power;
Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of heaven
As low as to the fiends!

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to the barber's with your beard. Prithee, say on; he's for a jig, or he sleeps: — say on; come to Hecuba.

1 Play. But who, Ah woe! had seen the mobled queen —

Ham. "The mobled queen?"

Pol. That's good; "mobled queen" is good.

1 Play. Run barefoot up and down, threatning the flame
With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head
Where late the diadem stood, and, for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket, in the alarm of fear caught up; —
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd;
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamor that she made,
Unless things mortal move them not at all,
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look, whether he has not turned his color and has tears in's eyes. Prithee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well; I'll have thee speak out the rest soon. — Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used; for they are the abstracts and brief chronicles of the time; after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live.

Pol. My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. Odd's bodikins, man, much better! Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, sirs.

Ham. Follow him, friends, we'll hear a play tomorrow. [*Exit* POLONIUS, *with some of the* PLAYERS] [*Aside to* 1 Player] Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play "The Murder of Gonzago"?

1 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

1 *Play.* Ay, my lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that lord; and look you mock him not. [*Exit* Player] My good friends, I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinore.

Ros. Good my lord!

Ham. Ay, so, God buy to you! —

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN

Now I am alone.
Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettl'd rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing; no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face,
Tweaks me by the nose, gives me the lie i' the throat,
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha!
'Swounds, I should take it: for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall

To make oppression bitter; or, ere this,
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal: bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! this is most brave;
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must fall a-cursing, like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain! I have heard
That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
I'll tent him to the quick; if he but blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil: and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness, and my melancholy,
As he is very potent with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. (The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.) Learn
[*Exit*

ACT III

Scene I

A Room in the Castle

Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and* Lords

King. And can you, by no drift of conference,
Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess he feels himself distracted,
But from what cause he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded,
But, with a crafty madness, keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well? 10

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition.

Ros. Niggard of question, but of our demands
Most free in his reply.

Queen. Did you assay him
To any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out that certain players
We o'er-raught on the way; of these we told him,

And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it; they are about the court,
And, as I think, they have already order
This night to play before him.
Pol. 'Tis most true;
And he beseech'd me to entreat your majesties
To hear and see the matter.
King. With all my heart; and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.
Good gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.
Ros. We shall, my lord.
[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN
King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too,
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia.
Her father and myself, lawful espials,
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge,
And gather by him, as he is behav'd,
If't be the affliction of his love or no
That thus he suffers for.
Queen. I shall obey you.
And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness; so shall I hope your virtues
Will bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honors.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit* Queen

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here. Gracious, so please you,
We will bestow ourselves. [*To* Ophelia] Read on this book,
That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this, —
'Tis too much proved, — that with devotion's visage
And pious action we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. [*Aside*] Oh, 'tis too true!
How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
Than is my deed to my most painted word.
O heavy burden!

Pol. I hear him coming; let's withdraw, my lord.

[*Exeunt* King *and* Polonius

Enter Hamlet

Ham. To be, or not to be, — that is the question.
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing end them. To die, — to sleep,
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; — to sleep; —

To sleep, perchance to dream! ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffl'd off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause; there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action. — Soft you now!
The fair Ophelia! — Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.

Oph. Good my lord,
How does your honor for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you; well.

Oph. My lord, I have remembrances of yours

That I have longed long to re-deliver;
I pray you now receive them.

Ham. No, not I; I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honor'd lord, I know right well you did,
And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd
As made these things more rich. Their perfume lost,
Take these again; for to the noble mind
Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind.
There, my lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My lord!

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

Oph. Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness; this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

Oph. Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believ'd me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it. I loved you not.

Oph. I was the more deceived.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery; why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were

better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offenses at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. Oh, help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go; farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

Oph. O heavenly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God hath given you one face, and you make yourselves another; you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say we will have no more marriages; those that are married already, all but one shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go. [*Exit*

Oph. Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite, down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy; Oh, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Re-enter King *and* Polonius

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend;
Nor what he spake, though it lack'd form a little,
Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
Will be some danger; which for to prevent,
I have in quick determination
Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England
For the demand of our neglected tribute;
Haply the seas and countries different
With variable objects shall expel
This something-settled matter in his heart,
Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well; but yet do I believe
The origin and commencement of his grief
Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia!
You need not tell us what lord Hamlet said;

We heard it all. My lord, do as you please;
But, if you hold it fit, after the play,
Let his queen mother all alone entreat him
To show his grief; let her be round with him;
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conference. If she find him not,
To England send him, or confine him where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so;
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go.

[*Exeunt*

Scene II

A Hall in the Castle

Enter Hamlet *and three of the* Players

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounc'd it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but, if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise; I could have such a fellow whipt for o'erdoing

Termagant; it out-herods Herod; pray you, avoid it.

1 *Play.* I warrant your honor.

Ham. Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor; suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone or come tardy off, though it make the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theater of others. Oh, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

1 *Play.* I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us, sir.

Ham. Oh, reform it altogether. And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary

question of the play be then to be considered; that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go, make you ready.

[*Exeunt* Players

Enter Polonius, Rosencrantz, *and* Guildenstern

How now, my lord! will the king hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the players make haste. [*Exit* Polonius] 50

Will you two help to hasten them?

Ros., Guil. We will, my lord.

[*Exeunt* Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Ham. What ho! Horatio!

Enter Horatio

Hor. Here, sweet lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

Hor. Oh, my dear lord, —

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd? 60
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been

As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
There is a play to-night before the king;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance
Which I have told thee of my father's death.
I pr'ythee, when thou see'st that act a-foot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe mine uncle; if his occulted guilt
Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
It is a damned ghost that we have seen,
And my imaginations are as foul
As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
And after we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my lord;
If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

Ham. They are coming to the play. I must be idle;
Get you a place.

Danish march; flourish. Enter King, Queen, Polonius, Ophelia, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern,

and other Lords attendant, *with the* Guard *carrying torches*

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i' faith; of the chameleon's dish; I eat the air, promise-cramm'd; you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine now. — [*To* POLONIUS] My lord, you play'd once in the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar; I was kill'd i' the Capitol; Brutus kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my lord; they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother; here's metal more attractive.

Pol. [*To the* KING] Oh, ho! do you mark that?

Oph. You are merry.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my lord.

Ham. O God, your only jig-maker. What should a man do but be merry? For, look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within 's two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord. 120

Ham. So long? Nay, then, let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables. O heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet? Then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year; but by-'r-lady, he must build churches then, or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby-horse, whose epitaph is, "For, O, for, O, the hobby-horse is forgot."

Hautboys play. The dumb-show enters

Enter a King *and a* Queen, *very lovingly; the* Queen *embracing him and he her. She kneels, and makes show of protestation unto him. He takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck: lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she, seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the* King's *ears, and exit. The* Queen *returns, finds the* King *dead, and makes passionate action. The* Poisoner, *with some two or three* Mutes, *comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The* Poisoner *woos the* Queen *with gifts; she seems loath and unwilling awhile, but in the end accepts his love.* [*Exeunt*

Oph. What means this, my lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching mallecho; it means 130 mischief.

Oph. Belike this show imports the argument of the play.

Enter Prologue

Ham. We shall know by this fellow; the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show.

Oph. I'll mark the play.

Pro. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter two Players, KING *and* QUEEN

P. King. Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

P. Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But, woe is me, you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state,
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must:
For woman's fear and love holds quantity;
In neither aught, or in extremity.
Now, what my love is, proof hath made you know,
And as my love is sized, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the littlest doubts are fear,
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

P. King. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do;
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honor'd, belov'd; and haply, one as kind
For husband shalt thou —
P. Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast;
In second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who kill'd the first.

Ham. [*Aside*] Wormwood, wormwood.

P. Queen. The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
P. King. I do believe you think what now you speak,
But, what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth but poor validity;
Which now, like fruit unripe, sticks on the tree,
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt;
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief or joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy;
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change,
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;
The poor advanc'd makes friends of enemies;
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend,
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend;

And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But, orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run,
That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own;
So think thou wilt no second husband wed,
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

P. Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
And anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well and it destroy!
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Ham. If she should break it now!

P. King. 'Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here a while;
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. [*Sleeps*

P. Queen. Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain.
[*Exit*

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

Ham. Oh, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offense in't?

Ham. No, no; they do but jest, poison in jest; no offense i' the world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The Mouse-trap. Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna;

Gonzago is the duke's name; his wife, Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work; but what of that? your majesty and we that have free souls, it touches us not; let the gall'd jade wince, our withers are unwrung.

Enter Lucianus

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the king.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

Oph. Still better, and worse.

Ham. Begin, murderer; leave thy damnable faces, and begin. Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property,
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[*Pours the poison into the sleeper's ear*

Ham. He poisons him i' the garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago; the story is extant, and written in very choice Italian; you shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The king rises!

Ham. What, frighted with false fire!

Queen. How fares my lord?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light. — Away!

All. Lights, lights, lights!

[*Exeunt all but* HAMLET *and* HORATIO

Ham. Why, let the strucken deer go weep,
The hart ungalled play;
For some must watch, while some must sleep;
So runs the world away.

Would not this, sir, and a forest of feathers, — if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me, — with two Provincial roses on my raz'd shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I

For thou dost know, O Damon dear,
This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself; and now reigns here
A very, very — pajock.

Hor. You might have rhym'd.

Ham. O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning.

Hor. I did very well note him.

Ham. Ah, ha! — Come, some music! come, the recorders!

For if the king like not the comedy,
Why then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music!

Enter Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Guil. Good my lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The king, sir, —

Ham. Ay, sir, what of him?

Guil. Is in his retirement marvelous distemper'd.

Ham. With drink, sir?

Guil. No, my lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom should show itself more richer to signify this to his doctor; for, for me to put him to his purgation, would perhaps plunge him into far more choler.

Guil. Good my lord, put your discourse into some frame, and start not so wildly from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, sir; pronounce.

Guil. The queen, your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my lord, this courtesy is not of the right breed. If it shall please you to make me a wholesome answer, I will do your mother's commandment; if not, your pardon and my return shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseas'd; but, sir, such answer as I can make you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother. Therefore no more, but to the matter; my mother, you say,—

Ros. Then thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But is there no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration? Impart.

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My lord, you once did love me.

Ham. So I do still, by these pickers and stealers.

Ros. Good my lord, what is your cause of distemper? You do surely bar the door upon your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the king himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, sir, but "While the grass grows," — the proverb is something musty.

Re-enter Players *with recorders*

Oh, the recorders! let me see one. — To withdraw with you, — why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. Oh, my lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Ros. I know no touch of it, my lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. S'blood! do you think I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

Re-enter Polonius

God bless you, sir!

Pol. My lord, the queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass and 'tis, like a camel indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like a weasel.

Pol. It is back'd like a weasel.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by. [*Aside*] They fool me to the top of my bent. — I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

Ham. "By and by" is easily said. [*Exit* POLONIUS] — Leave me, friends.

[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, HORATIO, *etc.*

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world; now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on. Soft! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural;
I will speak daggers to her, but use none;
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites,
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never, my soul, consent!

[*Exit*

SCENE III

A Room in the Castle

Enter KING, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you.
I your commission will forthwith dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you;

The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.
Guil. We will ourselves provide;
Most holy and religious fear it is
To keep those many many bodies safe
That live and feed upon your majesty.
Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound
With all the strength and armor of the mind
To keep itself from noyance, but much more
That spirit upon whose weal depend and rest
The lives of many. The cease of majesty
Dies not alone; but like a gulf doth draw
What's near it with it; it is a massy wheel,
Fired on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boisterous ruin. Never alone
Did the king sigh, but with a general groan.
King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.
Ros., Guil. We will haste us.

[*Exeunt* Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Enter Polonius

Pol. My lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home;

And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother,
Since nature makes them partial, should o'erhear
The speech, of vantage. Fare you well, my liege;
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know.

King. Thanks, dear my lord.

[*Exit* POLONIUS

Oh, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder! Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will;
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offense?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past. But, oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murder?"
That cannot be, since I am still possest
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offense?
In the corrupted currents of this world,

Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature; and we ourselves compell'd
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one can not repent?
O wretched state! O bosom black as death!
O limed soul that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and, heart with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new born babe!
All may be well. [*Retires, and kneels*

Enter Hamlet

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;
And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven;
And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd.
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.
Oh, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,

When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
No.
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent:
When he is drunk asleep or in his rage;
At gaming, swearing; or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't:
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven;
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell whereto it goes. My mother stays;
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Exit

King. [*Rising*] My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

[*Exit*

Scene IV

The Queen's Closet

Enter Queen *and* Polonius

Pol. He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screen'd and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me even here.
Pray you, be round with him.

Ham. [*Within*] Mother, mother, mother!

Queen. I'll warrant you;
Fear me not. Withdraw, I hear him coming.

[Polonius *hides behind the arras*

Enter Hamlet

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?
Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.
Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.
Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.
Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?
Ham. What's the matter now?
Queen. Have you forgot me?
Ham. No, by the rood, not so:
You are the queen, your husband's brother's wife;
And would it were not so, you are my mother.
Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.
Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you.
Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, help, ho!
Pol. [*Behind*] What, ho! help, help, help!
Ham. [*Drawing*] How now; a rat?
Dead, for a ducat, dead!
[Hamlet *makes a pass through the arras*
Pol. [*Behind*] Oh, I am slain.
[*Falls and dies*
Queen. O me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know not;
Is it the king?
Queen. Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
Ham. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
Queen. As kill a king?
Ham. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
[*Lifts up the arras, and discovers* POLONIUS
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune;
Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger. —
Leave wringing of your hands. Peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart: for so I shall
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.
Queen. What have I done, that thou dar'st wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?
Ham. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths; oh, such a deed
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words; heaven's face doth glow;
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,

With heated visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.
Queen. Ay me, what act,
That roars so loud, and thunders in the index?
Ham. Look here upon this picture and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury,
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form, indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense sure you have,
Else could you not have motion: but sure that sense
Is apoplex'd; for madness would not err,
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd
But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,

To serve in such a difference. What devil was't
That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman-blind?
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,
Or but a sickly part of one true sense
Could not so mope.
O shame! where is thy blush? Rebellious hell,
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
And melt in her own fire; proclaim no shame
When the compulsive ardor gives the charge;
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
And reason panders will.
Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more;
Thou turnest mine eyes into my very soul;
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.
Ham. Nay, but to live
Stewed in corruption —
Queen. Oh, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears;
No more, sweet Hamlet!
Ham. A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings,
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!
Queen. No more!
Ham. A king of shreds and patches, —

Enter Ghost

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! — What would your gracious figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad.

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command?
Oh, say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look! amazement on thy mother sits;
Oh, step between her and her fighting soul;
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is it with you, lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him! on him! — Look you, how pale he glares!
His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. — Do not look upon me;

Lest with this piteous action you convert
My stern effects; then what I have to do
Will want true color; tears, perchance, for blood.
Queen. To whom do you speak this?
Ham. Do you see nothing there?
Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?
Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.
Ham. Why, look you there! look how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived,
Look, where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
[*Exit* GHOST
Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain;
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.
Ham. Ecstasy!
My pulse, as yours, doth temperately keep time,
And make as healthful music; it is not madness
That I have utter'd; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks;
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past; avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,

For in the fatness of these pursy times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good.
Queen. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
Ham. Oh, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night: but go not to mine uncle's bed;
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat,
Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on. Refrain to-night,
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,
And either shame the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night;
And when you are desirous to be blest,
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,
[*Pointing to* Polonius
I do repent; but heaven hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him. So again, good night!
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.
One word more, good lady.
Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this, by no means, that I bid you do:
Let the bloat king
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know;
For who, that's but a queen, fair, sober, wise,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gib,
Such dear concernings hide? Who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep
And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England; you know that?

Queen. Alack,
I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd, and my two school-fellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work,
For 'tis the sport to have the enginer
Hoist with his own petar; and 't shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. Oh, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.
This man shall set me packing.

Mother, good night. — Indeed, this counselor
Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.
Come, sir, to draw toward an end with you: —
Good night, mother.

[*Exeunt severally;* Hamlet *dragging in* Polonius

ACT IV

SCENE I

A Room in the Castle

Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSENCRANTZ, *and* GUILDENSTERN

King. There's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves
You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.
Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.
[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN
Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night!

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the sea and wind, when both contend
Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries "A rat, a rat!" 10
And in this brainish apprehension kills
The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!
It had been so with us, had we been there.
His liberty is full of threats to all;
To you yourself, to us, to every one.

Alas, how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
It will be laid to us, whose providence
Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt
This mad young man; but so much was our love,
We would not understand what was most fit,
But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;
O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
Among a mineral of metals base,
Shows itself pure; he weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away!
The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
We must, with all our majesty and skill,
Both countenance and excuse Ho, Guildenstern!

Enter Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Friends both, go join you with some further aid;
Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him.
Go seek him out; speak fair, and bring the body
Into the chapel. I pray you, haste in this.

[*Exeunt* Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,
And let them know both what we mean to do
And what's untimely done; so, haply, slander
Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,

As level as the cannon to his blank,
Transports his poison'd shot, may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air. Oh, come away!
My soul is full of discord and dismay.

[*Exeunt*

Scene II

Another Room in the Castle

Enter Hamlet

Ham. Safely stowed.

Ros., Guil. [*Within*] Hamlet! lord Hamlet!

Ham. But soft, what noise? who calls on Hamlet? Oh, here they come.

Enter Rosencrantz *and* Guildenstern

Ros. What have you done, my lord, with the dead body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what? 10

Ham. That I can keep your counsel and not mine own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what replication should be made by the son of a king?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?

Ham. Ay, sir; that soaks up the king's countenance, his rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the

king best service in the end; he keeps them, like an ape doth nuts, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last swallow'd; when he needs what you have glean'd, it is but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my lord.

Ham. I am glad of it; a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

Ros. My lord, you must tell us where the body is, and go with us to the king.

Ham. The body is with the king, but the king is not with the body. The king is a thing —

Guil. A thing, my lord!

Ham. Of nothing; bring me to him. Hide fox, and all after. [*Exeunt*

Scene III

Another Room in the Castle

Enter King, *attended*

King. I have sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dangerous is it that this man goes loose!
Yet must not we put the strong law on him;
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes,
And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offense. To bear all smooth and even,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause; diseases desperate grown

By desperate appliance are reliev'd,
Or not at all.

Enter Rosencrantz

How now! what hath befallen?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my lord; guarded, to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my lord.

Enter Hamlet *and* Guildenstern

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper! Where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only emperor for diet; we fat all creatures else to fat us; and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king; and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to show you how a king may go a progress through a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. But indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there. [*To some* Attendants

Ham. He will stay till you come. 40

[*Exeunt* Attendants

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve
For that which thou hast done, — must send thee hence
With fiery quickness; therefore, prepare thyself;
The bark is ready and the wind at help,
The associates tend, and everything is bent
For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So is it, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them.
But come; for England! Farewell, dear mother. 50

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh; and so, my mother. Come, for England. [*Exit*

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;
Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night.

Away; for everything is seal'd and done
That else leans on the affair: pray you, make haste.
[*Exeunt* ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN
And, England, if my love thou hold'st at aught, —
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red
After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us — thou may'st not coldly set
Our sovereign process; which imports at full,
By letters conjuring to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun.
[*Exit*

SCENE IV

A Plain in Denmark

Enter FORTINBRAS, *a* Captain, *and* Soldiers *marching*

For. Go, captain, from me greet the Danish king.
Tell him that, by his license, Fortinbras
Claims the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his kingdom. You know the rendezvous.
If that his majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye;
And let him know so.
Cap. I will do't, my lord.
For. Go softly on.
[*Exeunt* FORTINBRAS *and* Soldiers

Enter Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, *and* Others

Ham. Good sir, whose powers are these?
Cap. They are of Norway, sir.
Ham. How purpos'd, sir, I pray you?
Cap. Against some part of Poland.
Ham. Who commands them, sir?
Cap. The nephew to old Norway, Fortinbras.
Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
Cap. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.
Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it.
Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.
Ham. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw;
This is the imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir.
Cap. God buy you, sir. [*Exit*
Ros. Will't please you go, my lord?
Ham. I will be with you straight. Go a little before. [*Exeunt all except* Hamlet
How all occasions do inform against me,

And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on the event, —
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward, — I do not know
Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do,"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me;
Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puft,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot

Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain? — Oh, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth! [*Exit*

Scene V

Elsinore. *A Room in the Castle*

Enter Queen, Horatio *and* A Gentleman

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate, indeed distract:
Her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have?

Gent. She speaks much of her father; says she hears
There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;
Spurns enviously at straws, speaks things in doubt
That carry but half sense; her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think there might be thought,
Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily.
'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may strew
Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Queen Let her come in. [*Exit* Gentleman
To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss;

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

Enter OPHELIA

Oph. Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

Queen. How now, Ophelia?

Oph. [*Sings*]

How should I your true love know
From another one?
By his cockle-hat and staff
And his sandal shoon.

Queen. Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone.

O, ho!

Queen. Nay, but, Ophelia, —

Oph. Pray you, mark.

[*Sings*] White his shroud as the mountain snow.

Enter KING

Queen. Alas, look here, my lord.

Oph. [*Sings*]

Larded with sweet flowers;
Which bewept to the grave did go,
With true love showers.

King. How do you, pretty lady?

Oph. Well, God 'ild you! They say the owl was a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray you, let's have no words of this; but when they ask you what it means, say you this:

[*Sings*] To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
All in the morning betime,
And I a maid at your window,
To be your Valentine.

King. How long hath she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient: but I cannot choose but weep, to think they would lay him i' the cold ground. My brother shall know of it; and so I thank you for your good counsel. — Come, my coach! — Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night. [*Exit*

King. Follow her close; give her good watch, I pray you.

Oh, this is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death O Gertrude, Gertrude,
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone; and he most violent author
Of his own just remove the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius' death; and we have done but greenly,

In hugger-mugger to inter him: poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts;
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France,
Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering-piece in many places
Gives me superfluous death. [*A noise within*
Queen. Alack, what noise is this?
King. Where are my Switzers? Let them guard the door. —

Enter a Messenger

What is the matter?
Gent. Save yourself, my lord;
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers. The rabble call him lord;
And as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry, "Choose we; Laertes shall be king!"
Caps, hands, and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
"Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!"

Queen. How cheerfully on the false trail they cry!
Oh, this is counter, you false Danish dogs!

[*Noise within*

King. The doors are broke.

Enter Laertes, *armed;* Danes *following*

Laer. Where is this king? Sirs, stand you all without.

Danes. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

Danes. We will, we will.

[*They retire without the door*

Laer. I thank you: keep the door. — O thou vile king,
Give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me bastard.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of his will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why thou art thus incens'd. Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.

Laer. Where's my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with.
To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes: only I'll be reveng'd
Most throughly for my father.
King. Who shall stay you?
Laer. My will, not all the worlds:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.
King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father's death, is't writ in your revenge,
That, swoopstake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?
Laer. None but his enemies.
King. Will you know them then?
Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
And like the kind life-rend'ring pelican
Repast them with my blood.
King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensibly in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce,
As day does to your eye.
[*A noise within*] Let her come in!
Laer. How now! what noise is that?

Enter Ophelia

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By heaven, thy madness shall be paid by weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heavens! is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?
Nature is fine in love, and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. [*Sings*]

> They bore him barefac'd on the bier;
> Hey non nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
> And on his grave rains many a tear; —

Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus.

Oph. You must sing "A-down a-down, and you call him a-down-a." O, how the wheel becomes it! It is the false steward, that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember; and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's rue for you; and here's some for me; we may call it herb-of-grace o' Sundays; oh, you must wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy; I would give you some violets, but they wither'd all when my father died; they say he made a good end.

[*Sings*]

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favor and to prettiness.

Oph. [*Sings*]

And will he not come again?
And will he not come again?
No, no, he is dead,
Go to thy death-bed,
He never will come again.

His beard was white as snow;
All flaxen was his poll;
He is gone, he is gone,
And we cast away moan!
God ha' mercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls, I pray God. God buy you! [*Exit*

Laer. Do you see this, O God?

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right. Go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,

And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction; but if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labor with your soul
To give it due content.
Laer. Let this be so;
His means of death, his obscure funeral,
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call't in question.
King. So you shall;
And where the offense is, let the great axe fall.
I pray you, go with me. [*Exeunt*

Scene VI

Another Room in the Castle

Enter Horatio *and a* Servant

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?
Serv. Sea-faring men, sir;
They say they have letters for you.
Hor. Let them come in.
[*Exit* Servant
I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from lord Hamlet.

Enter Sailors

1 *Sail.* God bless you, sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

1 *Sail.* He shall, sir, an't please him. There's a letter for you, sir, — it comes from the ambassador that was bound for England, — if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Hor. [*Reads*]

Horatio, when thou shalt have overlooked this, give these fellows some means to the king; they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor, and in the grapple I boarded them. On the instant, they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did; I am to do a turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. These good fellows will bring thee where I am. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.

Come, I will give you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them.

[*Exeunt*

Scene VII

Another Room in the Castle

Enter King *and* Laertes

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend,
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears; but tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So criminal and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, greatness, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up.

King. Oh, for two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinew'd
But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself, —
My virtue or my plague, be it either which, —
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so loud a wind,

Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desp'rate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that; you must not think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more;
I loved your father, and we love ourself;
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine.

Enter a Messenger

How now, what news?

Mess. Letters, my lord, from Hamlet;
These to your majesty; this to the queen.

King. From Hamlet? Who brought them?

Mess. Sailors, my lord, they say; I saw them not.
They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them
Of him that brought them.

King. Laertes, you shall hear them. —
Leave us. [*Exit* Messenger

[*Reads*] High and mighty, You shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes; when I shall, first asking your pardon, thereunto recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return. HAMLET.

He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd them. Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er, to play with you.
Now, out of this, —

Laer. What out of this, my lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father,

But that I know love is begun by time,
And that I see, in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will abate it,
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too-much. That we would do
We should do when we would; for this "would" changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But, to the quick o' the ulcer:
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' the church.

King. No place, indeed, should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home;
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together
And wager on your heads; he, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease
Or with a little shuffling you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't;
And for that purpose I'll anoint my sword.
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death
That is but scratch'd withal. I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that, if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project

Should have a back or second that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft, let me see!
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunnings —
I ha't!
When in your motion you are hot and dry, —
As make your bouts more violent to that end, —
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escape your venom'd stuck,
Our purpose may hold there. But stay, what noise?

Enter Queen

How now, sweet queen!

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow. Your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! — Oh, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant the brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them;
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clamb'ring to hang, an envious silver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued

Unto that element; but long it could not be,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, is she drown'd?

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears; but yet
It is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will; when these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord;
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly drowns it. [*Exit*

King. Let's follow, Gertrude;
How much I had to do to calm his rage!
Now fear I this will give it start again;
Therefore let's follow. [*Exeunt*

ACT V

Scene I

A Church-Yard

Enter two Clowns, *with spades, &c.*

1 *Clown.* Is she to be buried in Christian burial that willfully seeks her own salvation?

2 *Clo.* I tell thee she is; and therefore make her grave straight; the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2 *Clo.* Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clo.* It must be *se offendendo;* it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is, to act, to do, and to perform: argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2 *Clo.* Nay, but hear you, goodman delver, —

1 *Clo.* Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes; mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal, he that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2 *Clo.* But is this law?

1 *Clo.* Ay, marry, is't. Crowner's quest law.

2 *Clo.* Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.

1 *Clo.* Why, there thou say'st, and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian. Come, my spade. There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clo.* Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clo.* He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clo.* Why, he had none.

1 *Clo.* What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digg'd; could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee; if thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself —

2 *Clo.* Go to.

1 *Clo.* What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clo.* The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clo.* I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well; but how does it well? It does well to those that do ill; now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church: argal, the gallows may do well to thee To't again; come.

2 *Clo.* "Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?"

1 *Clo.* Ay, tell me that and unyoke.
2 *Clo.* Marry, now I can tell.
1 *Clo.* To't.
2 *Clo.* Mass, I cannot tell.

Enter Hamlet *and* Horatio, *at a distance*

1 *Clo.* Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say a grave-maker; the houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee in and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit* 2 Clown

1 *Clo.* [*Digs, and sings*]

In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought, it was very sweet,
To contract, — Oh! — the time for — Ah! — my behove,
Oh, methought there — Ah! — was nothing — Ah! — meet.

Ham. Hath this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so: the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1 *Clo.* [*Sings*]

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.

[*Throws up a skull*

Ham. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once; how the knave jowls it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o'er-reaches; one that would circumvent God, might it not?

Hor. It might, my lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good-morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, sweet lord?" This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse, when he went to beg it, might it not?

Hor. Ay, my lord.

Ham. Why, e'en so; and now my Lady Worm's; chapless, and knock'd about the mazard with a sexton's spade; here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? Mine ache to think on't.

1 *Clo.* [*Sings*]

A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For and a shrouding sheet:
Oh, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

[*Throws up another skull*

Ham. There's another; why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his

action of battery? Hum! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries; is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more, ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my lord.

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheepskins?

Hor. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave's this, sirrah?

1 *Clo.* Mine, sir. —

[*Sings*] Oh, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in't.

1 *Clo.* You lie out on't, sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in't, and yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine; 'tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.

1 *Clo.* 'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again, from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

1 *Clo.* For no man, sir.

Ham. What woman, then?

1 *Clo.* For none, neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

1 *Clo.* One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it; the age is grown so picked that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a grave-maker?

1 *Clo.* Of all the days i' the year, I came to't that day that our last king Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

1 *Clo.* Cannot you tell that? Every fool can tell that; it was the very day that young Hamlet was born; he that is mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry; why was he sent into England?

1 *Clo.* Why, because a' was mad; a' shall recover his wits there; or, if a' do not, it's no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

1 *Clo.* 'Twill not be seen in him there; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

1 *Clo.* Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

1 *Clo.* 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

1 *Clo.* Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?

1 *Clo.* I' faith, if he be not rotten before he die he will last you some eight year or nine year: a tanner will last you nine year.

Ham. Why he more than another?

1 *Clo.* Why, sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade that he will keep out water a great while; and your water is a sore decayer of your dead body. Here's a skull now; this skull has lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

1 *Clo.* A mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

1 *Clo.* A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! He poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Ham. This?

1 *Clo.* E'en that.

Ham. Let me see. [*Takes the skull*] Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft.

Where be your gibes now? Your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? Quite chapfallen? Now get you to my lady's table, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' the earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? pah!

[*Puts down the skull*

Hor. E'en so, my lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot; but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth into dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel?

> Imperial Cæsar, dead and turn'd to clay,
> Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
> Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
> Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!

But soft! but soft, awhile! — Here comes the king,

Enter Priests, &c., *in procession: the corpse of* Ophelia, Laertes *and* Mourners *following;* King, Queen, *their* Trains, &c.

The queen, the courtiers: who is this they follow?
And with such maimed rites? This doth betoken
The corse they follow did with desperate hand
Fordo its own life; 'twas of some estate.
Couch me a while, and mark.
[*Retiring with* Horatio

Laer. What ceremony else?
Ham. That is Laertes,
A very noble youth: mark.
Laer. What ceremony else?
1 *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty; her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles should be thrown on her;
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin crants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.
Laer. Must there no more be done?
1 *Priest.* No more be done.
We should profane the service of the dead
To sing a requiem and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.
Laer. Lay her i' the earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh

May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou liest howling.
Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!
Queen. Sweets to the sweet; farewell!
[*Scattering flowers*
I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not t' have strew'd thy grave.
Laer. Oh, treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of! — Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
[*Leaps into the grave*
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
To o'er-top old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.
Ham. [*Advancing*] What is he whose grief
Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane! [*Leaps into the grave*
Laer. The devil take thy soul!
[*Grappling with him*
Ham. Thou pray'st not well.
I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat;
For, though I am not splenitive and rash,

Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand!
King. Pluck them asunder.
Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet!
All. Gentlemen, —
Hor. Good my lord, be quiet.
[*The* Attendants *part them, and they come out of the grave*
Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme
Until my eyelids will no longer wag.
Queen. O my son, what theme?
Ham. I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?
King. Oh, he is mad, Laertes.
Queen. For love of God, forbear him.
Ham. Swounds, show me what thou'lt do;
Woo't weep? Woo't fight? Woo't fast? Woo't tear thyself?
Woo't drink up eisel? Eat a crocodile?
I'll do't. Dost thou come here to whine?
To outface me with leaping in her grave?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I:
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground
Singeing his pate against the burning zone
Make Ossa like a wart! Nay, and thou'lt mouth,
I'll rant as well as thou.
Queen. This is mere madness;
And thus awhile the fit will work on him;

Anon, as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence will sit drooping.
Ham. Hear you, sir,
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I lov'd you ever. But it is no matter;
Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew, and dog will have his day. [*Exit*
King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.
[*Exit* HORATIO
[*To* LAERTES] Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech;
We'll put the matter to the present push.
Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
This grave shall have a living monument;
An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
Till then, in patience our proceeding be. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

A Hall in the Castle

Enter HAMLET *and* HORATIO

Ham. So much for this, sir; now let me see the other;
You do remember all the circumstance?
Hor. Remember it, my lord!
Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep; methought I lay
Worse than the mutines in the bilboes. Rashly, —
And prais'd be rashness for it, — let us know,

Our indiscretion sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us
(There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.)
Hor. That is most certain.
Ham. Up from my cabin,
My sea-gown scarf'd about me, in the dark
Grop'd I to find out them; had my desire,
Finger'd their packet, and, in fine, withdrew
To mine own room again; making so bold,
My fears forgetting manners, to unseal
Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio, —
A royal knavery! — an exact command,
Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
With ho, such bugs and goblins in my life,
That, on the supervise, no leisure bated,
No, not to stay the grinding of the axe,
My head should be struck off.
Hor. Is't possible?
Ham. Here's the commission; read it at more leisure.
But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?
Hor. I beseech you.
Ham. Being thus be-netted round with villanies, —
Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play, — I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair; —
I once did hold it, as our statists do,

A baseness to write fair, and labor'd much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service: — wilt thou know
The effect of what I wrote?

Hor. Ay, good my lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them like the palm might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such like *as*'s of great charge,
That on the view and knowing of these contents,
Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd?

Ham. Why, even in that was heaven ordinant.
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal;
Folded the writ up in form of the other;
Subscrib'd it; gave't the impression; plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment;
They are not near my conscience; their defeat
Does by their own insinuation grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes

Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.
Hor. Why, what a king is this!
Ham. Does it not, thinks't thee, stand me now upon —
He that hath killed my king, and stained my mother,
Popp'd in between the election and my hopes,
Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
And with such cozenage — is't not perfect conscience
To quit him with this arm? And is't not to be damn'd,
To let this canker of our nature come
In further evil?
Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England
What is the issue of the business there.
Ham. It will be short; the interim is mine;
And a man's life's no more than to say "One."
But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
That to Laertes I forgot myself;
For by the image of my cause, I see
The portraiture of his. I'll court his favors;
But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
Into a towering passion.
Hor. Peace! who comes here?

Enter Osric

Osr. Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, sir. — [*Aside to* HORATIO.] Dost know this water-fly?

Hor. [*Aside to* HAMLET] No, my good lord.

Ham. [*Aside to* HORATIO] Thy state is the more gracious, for 'tis a vice to know him. He hath much land, and fertile; let a beast be lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the king's mess. 'Tis a chough, but, as I say, spacious in the possession of dirt.

Osr. Sweet lord, if your friendship were at leisure I should impart a thing to you from his majesty.

Ham. I will receive it, sir, with all diligence of spirit. Put your bonnet to his right use; 'tis for the head.

Osr. I thank your lordship, it is very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold; the wind is northerly.

Osr. It is indifferent cold, my lord, indeed.

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry and hot for my complexion.

Osr. Exceedingly, my lord; it is very sultry, — as 'twere, — I cannot tell how. — But, my lord, his majesty bade me signify to you that he has laid a great wager on your head; sir, this is the matter.

Ham. I beseech you, remember ——

[HAMLET *moves him to put on his hat*

Osr. Nay, good my lord; for mine ease, in good faith. Sir, here is newly come to court, Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society and great showing;

indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or calendar of gentry, for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his definement suffers no perdition in you; though, I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but yaw neither, in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Osr. Your lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, sir? Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath?

Osr. Sir?

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? You will do't, sir, really.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Osr. Of Laertes?

Hor. [*Aside to* Hamlet.] His purse is empty already; all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, sir.

Osr. I know you are not ignorant —

Ham. I would you did, sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much approve me. — Well, sir?

Osr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is —

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I should compare with him in excellence; but to know a man well, were to know himself.

Osr. I mean, sir, for his weapon; but in the imputation laid on him by them, in his meed he's unfellowed.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Osr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but well.

Osr. The king, sir, hath wager'd with him six Barbary horses; against the which he has impon'd, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so; three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. [*Aside to* HAMLET.] I knew you must be edified by the margent ere you had done.

Osr. The carriages, sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides; I would it might be hangers till then. But, on; six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish. Why is this impon'd, as you call it?

Osr. The king, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it

would come to immediate trial, if your lordship would vouchsafe the answer. 170

Ham. How if I answer no?

Osr. I mean, my lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; if it please his majesty, it is the breathing-time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the king hold his purpose, I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits. 180

Osr. Shall I re-deliver you e'en so?

Ham. To this effect, sir; after what flourish your nature will.

Osr. I commend my duty to your lordship.

Ham. Yours, yours. [*Exit* Osric] — He does well to commend it himself; there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did comply with his dug before he suck'd it. Thus has he, and many more of the same breed that I know the drossy age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter; a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fond and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial the bubbles are out. 190

Enter a Lord

Lord. My lord, his majesty commended him to you

by young Osric, who brings back to him that you attend him in the hall; he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time?

Ham. I am constant to my purposes; they follow the king's pleasure; if his fitness speaks, mine is ready; now or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The king and queen and all are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [*Exit* Lord

Hor. You will lose this wager, my lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at the odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart; but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, good my lord, —

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike anything, obey it; I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit; we defy augury; there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

Enter King, Queen, Laertes, Lords, Osric, *and* Attendants, *with foils and gauntlets; a table and flagons of wine on it*

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me.

[*The* King *puts the hand of* Laertes *into that of* Hamlet

Ham. Give me your pardon, sir; I have done you wrong;
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows, and you must needs have heard,
How I am punish'd with a sore distraction.
What I have done,
That might your nature, honor, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet;
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,
Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;
His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot my arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most

To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement,
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time
I do receive your offer'd love like love,
And will not wrong it.
Ham. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils. Come on.
Laer. Come, one for me.
Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.
Laer. You mock me, sir.
Ham. No, by this hand.
King. Give them the foils, young Osric. Cousin Hamlet,
You know the wager?
Ham. Very well, my lord;
Your grace has laid the odds o' the weaker side.
King. I do not fear it; I have seen you both.
But since he's better, we have therefore odds.
Laer. This is too heavy; let me see another.
Ham. This likes me well. — These foils have all a length?
Osr. Ay, my good lord.
[*They prepare to play*
King. Set me the stoups of wine upon that table.
If Hamlet give the first or second hit,

Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
The king shall drink to Hamlet's better breath;
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups;
And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heavens, the heavens to earth,
"Now the king drinks to Hamlet!" Come, begin.
And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.

[*Trumpets, the while*

Ham. Come on, sir.

Laer. Come, my lord. [*They play*

Ham. One.

Laer. No.

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well; — again.

King. Stay; give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine;
Here's to thy health.

[*Trumpets sound; and cannon shot off within*

Give him the cup.

Ham. I'll play this bout first; set it by awhile —
Come. [*They play*] Another hit; what say you?

Laer. I do confess 't.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;
The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.
Ham. Good madam.
King. Gertrude, do not drink!
Queen. I will, my lord; I pray you, pardon me.
King. [*Aside*] It is the poisoned cup! it is too late!
Ham. I dare not drink yet, madam; by-and-by.
Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.
Laer. My lord, I'll hit him now.
King. I do not think't.
Laer. [*Aside*] And yet it is almost against my conscience.
Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes; you do but dally;
I pray you, pass with your best violence;
I am afeard you make a wanton of me.
Laer. Say you so? Come on. [*They play*
Osr. Nothing, neither way.
Laer. Have at you now.
[LAERTES *wounds* HAMLET; *then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and* HAMLET *wounds* LAERTES
King. Part them! they are incens'd.
Ham. Nay, come, again. [*The* QUEEN *falls*
Osr. Look to the queen there, ho!
Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is it, my lord?
Osr. How is't, Laertes?
Laer. Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric;
I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
Ham. How does the queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.
Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink, — O my dear Hamlet, —
The drink, the drink! — I am poisoned! [*Dies*
Ham. O villany! — Ho! Let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! seek it out. [Laertes *falls*
Laer. It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good,
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand.
Unbated, and envenom'd; the foul practice
Hath turned itself on me; lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again; thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more; — the king, — the king's to blame.
Ham. The point envenom'd too!
Then, venom, to thy work! [*Stabs the* King
All. Treason! treason!
King. Oh, yet defend me, friends; I am but hurt.
Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,
Drink off this potion! — Is thy union here?
Follow my mother. [King *dies*
Laer. He is justly served;
It is a poison temper'd by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet;
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! [*Dies*
Ham. Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest) oh, I could tell you —
But let it be. — Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it;
I am more an antique Roman than a Dane;
Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As thou'rt a man,
Give me the cup; let go; by heaven I'll ha't!
O good Horatio, what a wounded name,
Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me!
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story. What warlike noise is this?

[*March afar off and shot within*

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. Oh, I die, Horatio;
The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit;
I cannot live to hear the news from England;
But I do prophesy the election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with th' occurrents, more and less,
Which have solicited — The rest is silence. [*Dies*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither? [*March within*

Enter Fortinbras, *the* English Ambassadors, *with drum, colors, and* Attendants

Fort. Where is this sight?
Hor. What is it you would see? 370
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
Fort. This quarry cries on havoc. O proud death,
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?
1 *Amb.* The sight is dismal;
And our affairs from England come too late;
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing,
To tell him his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?
Hor. Not from his mouth, 380
Had it the ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But since, so jump upon this bloody question,
You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view;
And let me speak to the yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning, and for no cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.
Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune;
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.
Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more.
But let this same be presently perform'd,
E'en while men's minds are wild; lest more mischance,
On plots and errors, happen.
Fort. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage;
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royally: and, for his passage,
The soldiers' music, and the rites of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field, but here shows much amiss.
Go bid the soldiers shoot. [*A dead march*

[*Exeunt, bearing off the bodies; after which a peal of ordnance is shot off*

NOTES

The following notes aim to give to the high school student simple and clear explanations, conformable to modern scholarship, of such difficulties as stand between the reader and an understanding of the movement of the play. Students who wish more thoroughgoing discussion of debated points, and fuller information on collateral subjects, should consult Furness's Variorum edition of the play, supplemented by later scholarly works.

ACT I

Scene I

Page 39. 6. **Upon your hour.** On time.

13. **Rivals.** Partners; see Oxford dictionary.

Page 40. 16. **Give you.** God give you.

23. **Fantasy.** Imagination.

29. **Approve.** Confirm; prove.

Page 41. 42. **Scholar.** In an emergency, the soldiers turn to the scholar; some critics think because he knew Latin, the language of religion and of magic, but note that no Latin is used.

45. **Would be spoke to.** Ghosts can't speak unless spoken to first.

48. **Majesty of buried Denmark.** Buried Majesty (King) of Denmark.

Page 42. 57. **Sensible and true avouch.** If my senses, my own eyes, did not avouch (declare) it true.

62. **Parle.** Conference.

63. **Sledded Polacks.** Poles, who use sledges (not necessarily on their sledges when he smote them).

65. **Jump.** Just.

71. **Why this . . . land.** Why this strict watch makes the subjects of the land toil nightly.

77. **Toward.** About to happen.

Page 43. 89. **Seized of.** Possessed of; still the customary legal term.

90. **Moiety competent was gaged.** An equivalent portion was wagered.

100. **Stomach.** Courage.

Page 44. 107. **Post-haste and romage.** Hurry and confusion.

117. **As stars.** Either a line has been omitted (editors have conjectured, "Tremendous prodigies in heaven appear'd" or "And as the earth, so portents fill'd the sky") or else Shakespeare's mind jumped from one kind of portent to another without stopping to explain.

118. **Moist star.** The moon (moist, because of its attraction for the sea).

120. **To doomsday.** As we still say colloquially, "sick to death."

122. **Harbingers.** The harbinger was the officer who rode ahead of the king to find lodging for his train.

Page 45. 133. **Privy to.** Secretly informed of.

134. **Happily.** Haply; perhaps. Horatio names three reasons for which ghosts were commonly thought to appear: to induce living persons to carry out some pious plan; to foretell or forestall evil; to reveal buried treasure.

140. **Partisan.** A long spear with an ax-head near the end.

154. **Extravagant and erring.** These words are almost synonyms; "out of bounds" and "wandering."

156. **Probation.** Proof.

Page 46. 162. **Strike.** Project evil influence.

163. **Takes.** Gets power over one (as an infection "takes").

Scene II

Page 46. 4. **Brow of woe.** Woeful brow.

Page 47. 11. **An auspicious and a dropping eye.** A more dignified phrasing of the familiar saying "to cry with one eye and laugh with the other."

Page 48. 38. **Dilated.** Set out in full.

47. **Native to.** Closely related to.

Page 49. 64. **Cousin.** Kinsman (a more general term than now).

65. **Kind.** A play on the two meanings, (1) friendly, well disposed, and (2) of the same family or breed (as in "cattle after their kind").

67. **In the sun.** In the brightness of royal favor; perhaps (as Johnson and many editors suggest) satirically, alluding to a proverb then current, "Out of heaven's blessing into the warm sun."

70. **Vailed.** Lowered.

75. **Particular.** Special.

Page 50. 92. **Obsequious.** Funereal (we still keep the noun obsequies in this sense).

95. **Incorrect to heaven.** Not submissive to the corrections of heaven.

99. **Vulgar.** Common. The whole line means "As anything most common and apparent to the senses."

104. **Still.** Always.

113. **Wittenberg.** This university, founded 1502, was well known in Shakespeare's day, and an appropriate place for a princely scholar. Neither Shakespeare nor his audience would have raised the question whether it existed in Hamlet's time.

114. **Retrograde.** Going in the opposite direction.

Page 51. 132. **Canon.** Law (of religion, as distinguished from civil law, that of the state).

137. **Merely.** Absolutely.

140. **Hyperion.** Apollo.—**Satyr.** In allusion to the gross, bestial character of Claudius.

141. **Beteem.** Allow.

Page 52. 150. **Discourse of reason.** A familiar phrase of this day, usually taken to mean power of reasoning.

157. **Incestuous.** To account in part for Hamlet's bitterness, remember that marrying within the degree of kinship forbidden by the church was then (and indeed much later) looked upon as a revolting sin.

163. **Change that name.** Exchange the name of friend with you.

164. **What make you from.** What are you doing, away from.

Page 53. 187. **A man.** Such a man that.

192. **Season your admiration.** Restrain your wonder.

Page 54. 200. **Cap-à-pé.** From head to foot.

204. **Distill'd almost to jelly.** Turned almost to jelly; *distill'd* is of course used without reference to any particular chemical process.

215. **It head.** The possessive *its* was rare in Shakespeare's time, *it* and *his* as neuter both being much more common.

Page 55. 230. **Beaver.** The movable part of the helmet, covering the face.

236. **Very like.** These words are usually spoken in a tone of astonishment at Horatio's comment; "It certainly would."

Page 56. 254. **Your loves.** Hamlet, as before, substitutes a more friendly phrase for the formal court greeting.

Scene III

Page 56. 2. **As.** According as.

Page 57. 7. **Primy.** Pertaining to springtime.

15. **No soil nor cautel.** No stain or deceit.

Page 58. 39. **Infants of the spring.** Young plants.

40. **Buttons.** Buds.

47. **Ungracious.** Graceless.

51. **Recks not his own rede.** Heeds not his own advice.

58. **These few precepts.** Worldly as most of these precepts are, they are not original with Polonius. Shakespeare represents him as repeating proverbial sayings, as if a father sending his son to college should quote "Poor Richard" at some length.

Page 59. 61. **Familiar, but by no means vulgar.** Be friendly, but don't take up with everybody.

69. **Censure.** Opinion.

81. **Season.** As wood is seasoned.

Page 60. 108. **Not to crack the wind,** etc. Not to run it out of breath, ride it to death.

115. **Woodcocks.** Birds easily caught in snares.

Page 61. 132. **Slander any moment's leisure.** Disgrace the leisure of a moment.

134. **Come your ways.** Come along. It was necessary to get Ophelia, as well as Polonius, off the stage, as there was no drop-curtain.

Scene IV

Page 62. 6. **Held his wont.** Kept his custom.

8. **Rouse.** Bumper (cup of wine).

9. **Keeps wassail.** Holds a drinking-bout.—**Upspring.** A wild German dance.

18. **Tax'd.** Blamed.

19. **Clepe us,** etc. Call us drunkards and soil that title with swinish phrase. If Hamlet hadn't been a prince, he might have said, "They say we drink like hogs."

27. **O'ergrowth of some complexion.** Excess of some one of the four fluids that were formerly thought to compose the blood and to determine the disposition.

29. **That too much o'erleavens,** etc. That spoils the effect of pleasing manners.

Page 63. 36. **The dram of eale,** etc. Nobody knows what these lines mean; guesses, most of them very wild, by over fifty scholars may be found in Furness's Variorum, Vol. I, pp. 82–88.

39. **Ministers of grace.** Spirits that bring God's favor.

43. **Questionable.** Inviting question.

47. **Canoniz'd.** Sainted (not in the strict sense that he was declared a saint by the Church, but as one speaks of a revered father).

54. **We fools of nature.** We, who are made fools of by nature.

Page 64. 73. **Might deprive your sovereignty of reason.** Might deprive your reason of its rule or command.

75. **Toys of desperation.** Desperate notions.

Page 65. 83. **Némean lion.** The lion that Hercules slew.—**Nerve.** Sinews or muscle.

85. **Lets.** Hinders.

Scene V

Page 66. 21. **Eternal blazon.** Revealing of the things of eternity.

Page 67. 33. **On Lethe wharf.** On the bank of the river of forgetfulness, in Hades.

37. **Process.** Narrative; official statement.

38. **Abus'd.** Deceived.

56. **Secure.** Free from care.

Page 68. 66. **Tetter.** Eruption; scurf.

72. **Unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd.** Without the last rites of the church, the sacrament, confession, and extreme unction (anointing with sacred oil).

82. **Matin.** Morning.

83. **Uneffectual.** Of no effect (in the light of dawn).

Page 69. 91. **Table.** Tablet.

93. **Saws.** Proverbs, wise sayings.

109. **Hillo, ho, ho!** Horatio uses a falconer's call to his bird.

Page 71. 141. **Upon my sword.** A very ancient oath in Teutonic countries; doubly sacred, in Christian times, because the sword-hilt formed a cross.

156. **Pioner.** Pioneer; soldier whose duty it was to dig trenches.

Page 72. 160. **Your philosophy.** Not Horatio's philosophy, especially; the "your" is slurred, and half contemptuous.

170. **"There be, an if they might."** There be persons, if they only might, who could tell.

ACT II

Scene I

Page 73. 7. **Danskers.** Danes.

8. **Where they keep.** Where they live.

9. **And finding . . . touch it.** Finding, by such roundabout means, that they know my son, you will come nearer to the facts about him than by direct questions.

Page 74. 29. **Another scandal.** A different sort of charge.

31. **Quaintly.** Ingeniously.

34. **A savageness,** etc. A wildness of the blood that affects young men in general.

38. **Fetch of wit.** Clever trick.

Page 75. 57. **O'ertook in 's rouse.** Overcome in drinking.

62. **With windlaces and with assays of bias.** By indirect means. Windlace was a term in use in Shakespeare's time for running a round-

about course. Bias is a term from bowling, meaning rolling a ball on a curve, a more effective method than rolling it straight.

74. **Closet.** Private room.

Page 77. 92. **Bulk.** Breast.

99. **Ecstasy.** Madness (not delight, as now).

100. **Fordoes.** Destroys.

109. **Quoted.** Marked, noted.

110. **Beshrew my jealousy.** A mischief on my suspiciousness.

Scene II

Page 78. 12. **Sith so neighbor'd,** etc. Since then, so near him in youthful tastes.

Page 79. 22. **Gentry.** Courtesy.

Page 80. 67. **Borne in hand.** Deceived, tricked.

Page 81. 80. **Likes us.** Pleases us.

81. **More consider'd time.** Time allowing fuller consideration.

Page 82. 105. **Perpend.** Consider. Shakespeare uses this word only in the mouths of comic characters.

110. **Beautified.** Possessed of beauty.

Page 83. 123. **Whilst this machine is to him.** While this body belongs to him; while he lives.

126. **More above.** More besides.

136. **Play'd the desk,** etc. Shut it all up, as in a desk or memorandum book.

137. **Winking.** To wink, in Shakespeare's day, meant to shut the eye and keep it shut.

145. **Took the fruits of.** Profited by.

Page 84. 148. **Watch.** Sleeplessness.

149. **Lightness.** Light-headedness.

159. **Center.** Of the earth.

163. **Arras.** Tapestry wall-hanging.

Page 85. 170. **Give me leave.** Equivalent to "I beg pardon."

172. **God-'a-mercy.** A formal acknowledgment, hardly more than "thank you."

182. **A good kissing carrion.** Carrion good for kissing by the sun, and so for breeding maggots.

190. **Matter.** Subject matter. Hamlet, in answering, purposely takes his meaning otherwise.

Page 86. 200. **If, like a crab,** etc. Hamlet speaks as if he were an old man who took offence at the author's slanders, and appeals to Polonius as to one who might some day come to be as old as Hamlet if he could go backwards, like a crab.

203. **Out of the air.** Indoors. There is no indication of scene, the caption "A Room in the Palace" being an addition of the 18th

century. Here, the scene is thought of for the moment as out-doors, as of course it actually was in the old theaters.

207. **Pregnant.** Full of meaning.

Page 87. 225. **Indifferent.** Ordinary.

226. **Happy.** Fortunate.

Page 88. 259. **Then are our beggars bodies.** All this talk is the witty fooling of young college men. Hamlet outdoes the clever saying of Rosencrantz by saying that if ambition is a shadow, kings must be also, and the only thing that is real must be the reverse of a king, a beggar.

265. **I am most dreadfully attended.** My servants are dreadful.

266. **What make you.** What are you doing? What is your business?

Page 90. 315. **Coted.** Outstripped (a term from coursing with hounds).

322. **Tickle o' the sere.** Light triggered, easily set off.

336. **An aery of children, little eyases,** etc. A nest of eaglets. The reference is to the choir-boys of St. Paul's, for whom Lily had been writing plays, and who had become so much the vogue as to have cut seriously into the profits of the regular companies, Shakespeare's among them.

Page 91. 343. **Escoted.** Paid.

344. **Quality.** Actor's profession.—**No longer than they can sing,** i. e., beyond their term of service as choir-boys.

348. **Succession.** Future.

350. **Tarre them on.** Set them on, like dogs.

357. **Carry it away.** "Get away with it."

358. **Hercules and his load.** The sign of Shakespeare's theater, the Globe, was Hercules with the world on his shoulders.

361. **Mows.** Grimaces.

Page 92. 370. **My extent.** The welcome I extend.

376. **Handsaw.** Hernshaw, a kind of heron hunted with hawks.

396. **Scene individable or poem unlimited.** Plays that follow, or are free from, the rule of unity of place.

Page 93. 398. **The law of writ and the liberty.** For following the written words or improvising.

407. **Jephthah, judge of Israel.** Hamlet is quoting from a ballad apparently well known at the time. The opening stanzas are printed in the Variorum.

419. **Valanced.** Fringed.

421. **Young lady and mistress.** The boy in the company who acted heroines' parts; no women acted in the public theaters.

Page 94. 423. **Chopine.** High French heel.

424. **Cracked within the ring.** Cracked too much for use. Before coins had a milled edge, the outer boundary of the coin was marked

by a circle. The small bit of metal beyond this circle might be cracked without impairing the value of the coin.

433. **Caviare to the general.** A delicacy thrown away on common people.

434. **Cried in the top of mine.** Were superior to mine.

439. **Indict the author of affectation.** Cause him to be charged with affectation.

Page 95. 453. **Gules.** Red (the heraldric name for the color).

458. **O'ersized.** Covered with size (or sticky substance, dried).

483. **Region.** Air.

Page 96. 491. **Fellies.** Pieces of wood that make the rim of a wheel.

498. **Mobled.** Possibly, wearing an informal head-covering like a mob-cap; but Hamlet himself is evidently puzzled by it.

502. **Bisson rheum.** Blinding tears.

514. **Passion.** Compassion.

Page 98. 552. **His whole function,** etc. Suiting the whole action of his body to the conception of his mind.

560. **Free.** Guilt-free, innocent.

564. **Unpregnant of.** Not quickened by.

Page 99. 576. **Region kites.** Vultures of the air.

588. **Presently.** At once.

601. **Relative.** To the purpose.

ACT III

Scene I

Page 100. 7. **Forward to be sounded.** Willing to submit to queries.

14. **Assay him to any pastime.** Try to interest him in any pastime.

17. **O'er-raught.** Overtook.

Page 101. 29. **Closely.** Secretly.

31. **Affront.** Meet face to face.

41. **Wonted.** Accustomed.

Page 102. 44. **Bestow ourselves.** Place ourselves.

45. **Color.** Furnish excuse for.

52. **More ugly to.** More ugly compared to.

Page 103. 65. **The rub.** A term from the game of bowls; an unevenness that throws the ball out of its path.

66. **What dreams,** etc. The dreams that may come must give us reason to pause.

70. **Of time.** Of the times.

75. **Quietus.** A legal term, meaning the paper given to a steward

or accountant when his accounts were settled, releasing him from responsibility.

76. **Fardels.** Packs.

79. **Bourn.** Boundary.

86. **Pitch and moment.** Loftiness and importance.

89. **Orisons.** Prayers. The book which Ophelia is reading is often, on the stage, represented as a prayer book, to fit this line.

Page 104. 103. **Honest.** Pure (the usual Elizabethan sense).

113. **His.** Its.

114. **Now the time gives it proof.** Referring, again, to his mother's unfaithfulness.

118. **We shall relish of it.** We shall keep some flavor of our old sinful stock, in spite of all virtue can do.

122. **Indifferent honest.** Of average virtue.

Page 105. 130. **Where is your father?** As usually played, Polonius just before this point has betrayed to Hamlet his presence, as by accidentally letting his hand be seen, and when Hamlet finds that Ophelia is lying to him he includes her in the passionate outbreak against the falseness of women which follows.

143. **Your paintings.** You women, painting your faces.

146. **Make your wantonness your ignorance.** Try to make your wantonness appear innocence.

Page 106. 154. **Expectancy,** etc. What the nation looks forward to, its chief flower, the mirror of fashion, the mould in which good form is cast.

161. **Blown youth.** Youth in full bloom.

162. **Ecstasy.** Madness.

164. **Affections.** The way his mind is affected.

173. **Haply.** Perhaps.

Scene II

Page 107. 9. **Periwig-pated fellow.** Fellow wearing a periwig, or a large, full wig such as was, in Shakespeare's time, just coming into fashion for court notables. (Tragic actors wore court costumes of the day, irrespective of the historical period of the play they were acting.)

11. **Groundlings.** People occupying the ground or yard of the theater, the cheapest part.—**Capable of nothing.** Able to appreciate nothing.

Page 108. 14. **Termagant.** Supposed, in the middle ages, to be the god of the Saracens, and thought of as a violent blustering character.—**Herod.** In the old mystery plays, a favorite character with the mob, for his raging and blustering.

20. **Modesty.** Moderation.

21. **From the purpose.** Apart from the purpose.
25. **Pressure.** Impress (as of a seal, in wax).
26. **Come tardy off.** Done haltingly.
28. **Censure.** Opinion (not blame, necessarily).
34. **Journeymen.** Assistant workmen; nature's workshop had not turned out a good job.
37. **Indifferently.** Fairly.
41. **Of them.** Some of them.

Page 109. 55. **Just.** Normal, well balanced.
56. **As e'er my conversation coped withal.** That my familiar acquaintance ever came in contact with. "You're the best all round man I ever knew."

Page 110. 70. **Blood and judgment.** Passion and reason.
81. **Occulted.** Hidden.
88. **Censure of his seeming.** Discussion of how he appears.
92. **Danish march.** Shakespeare's audience would recognize this, as the processions in honor of Queen Anne had included Danish music.

Page 111. 94. **Chameleon's dish.** The chameleon was popularly supposed to feed on air.
108. **Stay upon your patience.** Await your good will, for permission to begin.

Page 112. 122. **Suit of sables.** Set of rich furs. (In the century before Shakespeare, all under the degree of earl were forbidden to wear sables.)
127. **"The hobby-horse is forgot."** Apparently from an old ballad lamenting the disappearance of the once popular hobby-horse from May games.
130. **Miching mallecho.** Skulking evil. (Furness suggests "meaching," common in New England; a "meaching, hang-dog look.")

Page 113. 142. **Posy.** Motto engraved on a ring.
155. **I distrust you.** I fear for you.

Page 114. 164. **My operant powers,** etc. My active powers cease performing their functions.

Page 115. 207. **Anchor's cheer.** The fare of an anchorite, or hermit.
225. **Tropically.** By a trope, or figure of speech.

Page 116. 230. **Let the gall'd jade wince.** Referring to a proverb, "The galled horse soonest winces."—**Our withers are unwrung;** a horse is "wither-wrung" when the saddle has made a gall or sore spot where it rubs against his neck.

Page 117. 260. **Forest of feathers.** Alluding to the use of feathers in actors' costumes.
262. **Provincial roses on my raz'd shoes.** French rosettes on my slashed ("open work") shoes.

263. **Cry of players.** Pack (as of dogs).
269. **Pajock.** Peacock.
277. **Recorders.** A long tube instrument like a flageolet.
Page 119. 310. **Amazement and admiration.** Practically synonymous—wonder and astonishment.
319. **Pickers and stealers.** Hands (from the phrase in the Church Catechism, "to keep my hands from picking and stealing").
327. **The proverb.** "While the grass grows, the silly steed doth starve."
329. **Recover the wind of me.** A phrase from hunting; get on the side away from the wind, as a hunter does to avoid being scented.
330. **Toil.** Net, trap.
Page 120. 354. **Though you can fret me.** "Frets" are stops on instruments of the guitar kind; so here Hamlet plays on the word in its musical sense and in the other sense, "annoy, vex."
358. **Presently.** At once.
Page 121. 366. **By and by.** Immediately.

Scene III

Page 122. 5. **Terms of our estate.** Condition of our state.
11. **Single and peculiar.** Private and individual.
13. **Noyance.** Injury, danger.
15. **The cease of majesty.** The death of a king.
28. **Arras.** Tapestry, wall hanging (so called from Arras, in France, where famous tapestries were woven).
29. **Tax him home.** Reprove him soundly.
Page 123. 33. **Of vantage.** From a place of vantage, a secret place.
39. **Though inclination,** etc. Though I not only determined to pray, but wished to, as well.
46. **Whereto serves mercy,** etc. What is mercy for, if not to meet sin face to face?
Page 124. 61. **There the action lies.** In the court of Heaven, the case rests on its real merits.
68. **Limed soul.** Caught in sin, as a bird is caught in lime.
69. **Make assay.** Come thronging to the rescue ("assay" was used for a charge or onset of troops).
75. **Would be scann'd.** Should be examined.
82. **His audit.** His account.
Page 125. 88. **Hent.** Grip.
94. **My mother stays.** My mother is waiting.
95. **This physic.** The king's assumed piety gives him a little respite, but does not save his life.

Scene IV

Page 126. 14. **The rood.** The Cross of Christ.

Page 127. 39. **Proof and bulwark.** Nouns (armor and fortifica tion) used here as adjectives; armed and fortified.

43. **Takes off the rose,** etc. Takes the ornament of innocent lov from a fair forehead, and brands it with guilt.

47. **Contraction.** The marriage contract.

50. **Solidity and compound mass.** The solid mass of the earth

Page 128. 51. **The doom.** The day of judgment.

55. **Counterfeit presentment.** Likeness.

57. **Hyperion.** The Titan, god of the sun before Apollo.—**Front** Brow.

59. **Station.** Posture.

65. **Mildew'd ear,** etc. A diseased ear of grain, spoiling thos near it.

72. **Sense sure you have,** etc. This difficult passage may b taken to mean: You must have your senses (eyesight, etc.) or yo could not have desires; but your senses must be diseased. Madnes would not make such mistakes; the senses were never so overcom by insanity as not to keep some little power of judgment, so as t choose between such different objects.

Page 129. 78. **Cozen'd you at hoodman-blind.** Cheated you a blind-man's buff.

91. **Grained.** Colored indelibly.

96. **Tithe.** Tenth part, "not a twentieth of a tenth."

97. **Vice.** This reference is to the character known as the "Vice' in old plays, who was a low buffoon and mischief-maker.

Page 130. 113. **Conceit.** Imagination.

120. **Excrements.** Hair, nails, etc. Your hair stands up as i hairs, nails, and the like, really had life.

Page 132. 154. **Curb.** Bend.

Page 133. 186. **Paddock.** Toad.—**Gib.** Tom-cat.

187. **Dear concernings.** Matters of intimate concern.

202. **Enginer.** Contriver, plotter.

203. **Hoist with his own petar.** Blown up with his own cannon.

ACT IV

Scene I

Page 135. Enter King, etc. In the quarto editions, there was n break; the scene continued with the entrance of the king, who found the queen as Hamlet left her.

Page 136. 25. **Ore.** Restricted, in Shakespeare's day, to gold, which was purified by fire from the baser substances.

26. **Mineral.** Mine.

41. **O'er the world's diameter.** Across half the world.

Page 137. 42. **Level.** Straight to the mark.

Scene II

Page 137. 15. **The king's countenance . . . his authorities.** His favor . . . his position of authority.

Page 138. 27. **The body is with the king,** etc. Hamlet is apparently bewildering Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (as he has bewildered many critics) by making up a wise sounding maxim that means nothing.

30. **Of nothing.** Of no worth.—**Hide fox,** etc. A children's game, like hide-and-seek, was so called. Hamlet may have thought of Polonius as the "fox."

Scene III

Page 139. 31. **Go a progress.** Go on a royal journey of state.

Page 140. 46. **Associates tend.** Companions are waiting.

55. **At foot.** In his footsteps (as we say now, "at heel").

Page 141. 62. **Thy free awe pays homage.** Thy awe freely pays homage.

63. **Mays't not coldly set our sovereign process.** Not coldly set aside our royal letter ("process" was used for any important document).

65. **Conjuring.** Demanding.

66. **Present.** Immediate.

Scene IV

Page 142. 22. **Sold in fee.** Sold outright (with no restrictions).

27. **Imposthume.** Sore full of matter.

30. **God buy you.** A contraction of "God be with you," now further contracted to "Goodbye."

Page 143. 39. **Fust.** Grow mouldy.

40. **Bestial oblivion.** Beast-like forgetfulness.

41. **On the event.** About the outcome.

Page 144. 64. **Continent.** Space to contain them.

Scene V

Page 144. 6. **Spurns enviously.** Kicks angrily.

8. **Move the hearers to collection.** Make the hearers try to collect some meaning (from her speech).

18. **Each toy,** etc. Each trifle seems to foretell some great disaster.

Page 145. 19. **Jealousy.** Suspicion.

25. **Cockle-hat.** Hat with a cockle-shell in it. Like the sandals, a sign of being a pilgrim, and a favorite disguise for secret lovers.

38. **Larded.** Garnished.

Page 146. 42. **God 'ild you.** God yield (reward) you.—**The owl was a baker's daughter.** Referring to an old legend of the girl who was changed to an owl because she begrudged some bread to Christ. See Furness, Vol. I, p. 332.

Page 147. 68. **In hugger-mugger.** In secret.

74. **Wants not buzzers,** etc. Does not lack whisperers to poison his ears.

76. **Wherein necessity,** etc. People under necessity of explaining his father's death, but having no facts, do not hesitate to accuse the king.

79. **Murdering-piece.** A cannon that scattered fragments of metal.

83. **His list.** Its boundaries.

85. **In a riotous head.** A riotous armed mob.

Page 148. 94. **This is counter,** etc. In the wrong direction (a term from hunting).

Page 149. 114. **Conscience and grace.** Moral and religious scruples.

118. **Stay you.** Stop you.

124. **Swoopstake.** A term from gambling, meaning to gather up everybody's money, winners and losers together.

128. **Pelican.** Referring to the legend that the mother pelican stabs her own breast with her bill that the young birds may feed on her blood.

132. **Sensibly.** Feelingly.

Page 150. 137. **Sense and virtue.** Practically synonymous; both mean the power of seeing.

143. **Fine.** Delicately tender.

153. **O, how the wheel becomes it.** How well the song and the sound of spinning go together. Ophelia has in mind the common practice of singing as one worked at the spinning wheel.

156. **Rosemary,** etc. The significance of all these flowers is discussed at length in Furness, I, 946.

159. **A document.** A lesson.

Page 152. 195. **No trophy, sword, nor hatchment.** Referring to the custom of displaying a nobleman's arms and insignia over his grave.

Scene VI

Page 153. 19. **Thieves of mercy.** Merciful thieves (as we say, "a man of honor").

23. **Much too light for the bore of the matter.** Bore, in the sense of the calibre of a gun; my words, weighty as they are, are of lighter bore than the meaning they carry.

Scene VII

Page 154. 13. **Be it either which.** Whichever it be.

14. **Conjunctive.** Conjoined.

15. **As the star,** etc. According to ancient astronomy, each planet was thought to be fixed in a crystal sphere, and to move only as the sphere moved.

18. **The general gender.** The common race of people.

21. **Convert his gyves to graces.** Change his fetters to ornaments.

Page 155. 28. **Stood challenger,** etc. Her worth, like a mounted champion, challenged all the age to deny her perfection.

Page 156. 67. **Uncharge.** Acquit of blame.—**Practice.** Treachery.

Page 157. 76. **Siege.** Seat, hence rank (as in the King Arthur story, the Siege Perilous).

81. **Importing health and graveness.** The gay garments of youth import health, as the dark ones of age import seriousness.

87. **Incorps'd and demi-natur'd.** Had become part of the horse's body, and shared his nature.

88. **Topt.** Excelled.

89. **Forgery.** Invention.

100. **Scrimers.** Fencers.

Page 158. 117. **Plurisy.** Here apparently used for plethora, or excess.

Page 159. 134. **Remiss.** Careless.

136. **Peruse.** Examine closely.

138. **Unbated.** With point not blunted.—**Pass of practice.** Treacherous thrust.

141. **Unction.** Ointment.—**Mountebank.** Quack-doctor.

143. **Cataplasm.** Poultice.

144. **Simples that have virtue.** Herbs that have medicinal power.

Page 160. 160. **Chalice.** Drinking cup.—**For the nonce.** For the occasion.

171. **Liberal.** Free-spoken.

179. **Incapable of.** Insensible to.

ACT V

Scene I

Page 162. 4. **Straight.** Straightway, at once.—**Crowner.** Coroner.
9. **Se offendendo.** In her own offense (he means defence, *defendendo*).
12. **Argal.** The clown's attempt to say *ergo* (therefore), one of the many legal phrases he has picked up and misquotes.
Page 163. 28. **Even Christian.** Fellow Christian.
Page 164. 61. **"In youth, when I did love."** The clown sings fragments of a song printed in 1557 (Tottel's Miscellany); as usual, misquoting and making nonsense of it.
67. **A property of easiness.** An easy occupation.
Page 165. 85. **When he went to beg it.** When he was going to (intended to) beg it.
92. **Play at loggats.** Throw them about as sticks are thrown in the game of loggats.
99. **His quiddits, his quillets,** etc. Shakespeare makes Hamlet bring together a lot of technical legal terms as a scornful summing up of all the red-tape of the law.
Page 167. 139. **Absolute.** Perfect.
140. **By the card.** With precision.—**Equivocation.** Double meaning.
142. **The age is grown so picked,** etc. The times are so fine that the peasant has caught up with the courtier (referring to the fashionable sort of witty talk, like that of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Act II, Sc. II; the clown is as clever at it as the courtier).
Page 169. 196. **Table.** Dressing table.
197. **To this favor.** To this countenance.
Page 170. 235. **Crants.** Garland.
Page 172. 279. **Eisel.** Vinegar.
Page 173. 290. **Golden couplets.** The young doves (usually two in the nest).

Scene II

Page 173. 6. **Mutines in the bilboes.** Mutineers chained together by the leg, to long iron bars.
22. **Such bugs and goblins.** Imaginary terrors, bugbears.
23. **On the supervise,** etc. At sight, no delay allowed.
33. **Statists.** Statesmen.
Page 175. 59. **Insinuation.** Meddling.
Page 176. 61. **Pass.** Thrust.

63. **Does it not . . . stand me now upon;** very near in meaning to the modern slang, "isn't it up to me."—**Thinks't thee.** Does it seem to thee (compare *methinks*).

68. **Quit him.** Requite, pay him.

79. **Bravery.** Display.

Page 177. 108. **Excellent differences.** Distinctions that mark him out from other men.

Page 178. 110. **Card** (map) **or calendar** (time table) **of gentry.** A perfect model of gentility.

113. **Sir, his definement,** etc. Hamlet is ridiculing Osric's inflated court language. Osric evidently can't follow at all, and simply gasps out a general assent. It is not necessary to puzzle out the exact meaning of either Hamlet's lines or Osric's; Shakespeare meant them to be bewilderingly affected, as a satire on the fashionable talk of his day.

Page 179. 150. **Impon'd.** Staked; "put up."

154. **Liberal conceit.** Elaborate design.

157. **Must be edified by the margent.** Must turn to the notes for an explanation (explanatory notes being printed, in old books, in the wide margin of the page).

160. **More germane.** More closely related.

Page 180. 190. **Comply with.** Stand on ceremony with.

193. **A kind of yesty collection,** etc. A kind of frothy lot of words that takes them through all sorts of opinions, both foolish (fond) and sifted (winnowed).

Page 181. 208. **Gentle entertainment.** Courteous greeting.

216. **Gain-giving.** Misgiving.

Page 183. 249. **In my terms of honor,** etc. Laertes is satisfied as far as his personal feelings are concerned; he must consult more experienced men of honor as to whether his honor is secure and his good name unwounded.

260. **Stick fiery off.** Stand out brilliantly.

268. **Likes me.** Suits me.

Page 184. 275. **An union.** A pearl.

278. **Kettle.** Kettledrum.

Page 185. 307. **Make a wanton of me.** Treat me like a child.

314. **Woodcock to mine own springe.** A woodcock trained to decoy other birds may get caught in the snare itself.

Page 186. 336. **Temper'd.** Mixed.

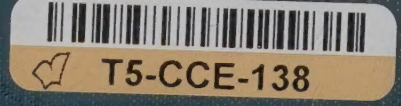
Page 187. 361. **O'er-crows.** Triumphs over, as a cock crows after defeating another.

365. **Occurrents.** Things that have occurred.

Page 188. 372. **Quarry.** Heap of dead, a term from hunting.—**Cries on havoc.** Calls for a general slaughter, as a punishment.

383. **So jump.** So immediately.

Page 189. 397. **Some rights of memory.** Some remembered rights.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